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A

GENERAL HISTORY

OF THE

CHRISTIAN CHURCH,

TO THE

FALL OF THE WESTERN EMPIRE.

By JOSEPH PRIESTLEY, LL.D. F.R.S.

AC. IMP. PETROP. R. PARIS. HOLM. TAURIN. ITAL. HARLEM. AUREL. MED. PARIS. CANTAB. AMERIC. ET PHILAD. SOCIUS.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

V. 1

VOL. I.

Ο περι του θεου διηγηματικος ημιν λογος, τους υπερ αληθειας μαλλον η υπερ πατριδος, ανδρισαμενους αιωνιαις αναγραψεσθαι στηλαις — των ευσεβειας αθλητων τας ενστασεις, και τους επι τουτοις στεφανους εις αιωνιον μνημην ανακηρυττων.

EUSEBIUS.

BIRMINGHAM,

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MDCCXC.

1867451

THE

DEDICATION.

To SAMUEL SHORE, *Eſq.*

DEAR SIR,

I Do not think that I can dedicate a hiſtory of the chriſtian church to any perſon with ſo much propriety, as to one whoſe conduct, like yours, has long proved him to be a ſteady friend of chriſtianity, and whoſe object it has been to preſerve it as unmixed as poſſible with every thing that has a tendency to corrupt and debaſe it.

Every chriſtian muſt rejoice in reviewing the riſe of his religion, and the progreſs which, notwithſtanding the oppoſition it met with from all the power and policy of man, it made in the world; as it affords the ſtrongeſt conviction of the ſolidity of the ground on which it reſts, and thereby confirms to us the moſt valuable of all human proſpects, that of a reſurrection to immortal life, a proſpect which nothing but the goſpel can give us.

Alſo, a review of the glorious ſufferings of the ancient martyrs, which evidences the firmneſs of their faith, in circumſtances in which they had the beſt opportunity of ſatisfying themſelves concerning the foundation of it, cannot fail both to ſtrengthen our faith, and to animate

our zeal, and thereby lead us to *feel*, and, if there ſhould be occaſion, to *act*, as they did, who, through the hope of a *better life*, chearfully endured all that men could inflict upon them in *this*. Compared with what *they* did and ſuffered, what is all that *we* can ſacrifice in the ſame cauſe? How zealous then ſhould we be to compenſate by *active* ſervices, for the want of more meritorious *paſſive* ones?

As an active friend of religious liberty, you, Sir, will rejoice to ſee the progreſs that chriſtianity made while it was left to its own energy, unfettered by that fatal *alliance* which it afterwards unhappily formed with the powers of this world; when the zeal of its friends ſupplied its miniſters with every thing that they want-

ed, without any compulſion, and when all, with one heart, devoted themſelves to the cauſe of truth and virtue.

But you will likewiſe, in this period of the hiſtory, ſee the commencement of that moſt unnatural *alliance*, which has been the ſource of ſuch dreadful abuſes, and which continues to this day, when the *State*, inſtead of receiving the ſpirit of the *chriſtian church*, a ſpirit of meekneſs, temperance, heavenly-mindedneſs, and univerſal charity, imparted to the miniſters of the church, its own corrupt principles and manners; inflaming them with a thirſt for wealth and power, and even diveſting them of the principles of humanity and compaſſion, whenever any obſtacle oppoſed their ambitious views; ſo that

that at length the perſecution of chriſtians by chriſtians became as bloody and unrelenting, as that of the pagan emperors.

Even in this reformed country, and with all the pretenſions of modern times to liberality of ſentiment, the miniſters of Chriſt, *whoſe kingdom was not of this world*, deceived by the flattering conſequences of this alliance, and in theſe inſtances departing from the precepts of equal juſtice, and the example of their great maſter, too frequently become advocates for ſuch meaſures of government as would ſubject their fellow chriſtians to heavy civil penalties; and are led to urge the continuance of laws which deprive acknowledged good ſubjects of the common

rights of citizens, merely on account of a difference reſpecting religious doctrines or forms of worſhip.

This ſtate of things ſhould excite the temperate, but ſteady and unremitted, efforts of every true friend to the rights of mankind, to oppoſe all eccleſiaſtical, as well as civil, tyranny; and there can be no doubt but that, as this ſpirit diffuſes itſelf, all oppoſition muſt in time give way before it, and an end be put to all uſurpations on the conſciences of men. And when we ſhall ſee every claim to antichriſtian power actually yield to general conviction, and perceive the weak ſupports on which that power has hitherto reſted, many will wonder that human nature could ever have ſubmitted to

it,

it, and our poſterity will want the evidence of hiſtory to be convinced of its exiſtence.

It is a real ſatisfaction, though at the firſt aſpect of a melancholy kind, to trace the progreſs of thoſe ſuperſtitions, and thoſe corruptions, in doctrine and diſcipline, by which chriſtianity has been ſo much debaſed, and the natural influence of it diminiſhed, now that, by the force of its own principles, it has, in a great meaſure, recovered itſelf from the deplorable ſtate into which it had ſunk. This circumſtance furniſhes an additional evidence of its truth and importance, and affords a ſure proſpect that, in due time, it will purge itſelf from every thing that has hitherto defiled it, and become once more what it was at its firſt promul-

gation.

gation. And it may well be preſumed that the knowledge we now have of thoſe corruptions, and of the cauſes which produced them, will effectually prevent a relapſe into any ſimilar ſtate for the future.

We may therefore conſider ourſelves as in a better ſituation than that of the primitive chriſtians, as theirs may be compared to that of Adam in Paradiſe, innocent, indeed, but without the knowledge of evil, and therefore inſecure; whereas ours is a ſtate of equal purity, but ſuperior knowledge, and conſequently of greater ſecurity; ſo that, without the fear of any more corruptions, we may enjoy, by anticipation, the proſpect of the certain, if not ſpeedy, downfal of all error, before the increaſing light of truth, and of every

power, temporal or ſpiritual, that oppoſes itſelf to *the kingdom of God and of Chriſt*; which the ſure word of prophecy informs us, is to eſtabliſh itſelf in the world, and to continue till time ſhall be no more. We every day ſee ſigns of the nearer approach of thoſe glorious times, in which truth, virtue and liberty will diffuſe themſeves over the whole earth, and when error, vice, and tyranny, will in every country fall before them.

You will rejoice with me that there is now one country in the world, and one of growing extent and importance, in which chriſtianity ſubſiſts without any alliance with the ſtate; and that the eyes of a neighbouring kingdom, formerly the ſeat of a moſt grievous perſecution, are now ſo far opened as to ſee

the

the folly of depriving men of their civil rights on account of their religious opinions, that their freedom will probably be much more compleat than ours; and, with all the friends of liberty, you will indulge the pleaſing proſpect, that ſo glorious an example will be followed by other countries.

In the mean time, let us not fail to do our part to promote this great cauſe. Be it our ſtudy to underſtand the genuine principles of the goſpel we profeſs, and to be aſſiduous in propagating them, by enlightening the minds of all to whom we have acceſs.

Partaking, I hope, in your juſt feelings on this important ſubject,

I am, Dear Sir,

Your friend and

Fellow chriſtian,

BIRMINGHAM, *Jan.* 1, 1790.

J. PRIESTLEY.

THE

PREFACE.

THE idea of writing this hiſtory was firſt ſuggeſted by the attention that I have lately given to the eccleſiaſtical writers of the four or five firſt centuries, in order to determine what was the faith of the primitive church concerning the perſon of Chriſt. Seeing that this opinion, and others connected with it, had been greatly miſconceived, and miſrepreſented, by all the eccleſiaſtical hiſtorians, I was willing to exhibit the original doctrine, and the gradual deviations from it, in a regular hiſtory of every thing relating to the chriſtian church. For want of an eccleſiaſtical hiſtory written on theſe juſt principles,

ciples, perſons were under a neceſſity of forming wrong conceptions on this important ſubject from every hiſtory that could fall into their hands.

It alſo appeared to me, that there was no eccleſiaſtical hiſtory that was not either too voluminous to be generally read, or too conciſe to be of much uſe. Moſheim's, which is moſt read by Proteſtants, beſides labouring under the great objection of miſtating the important opinions above mentioned, is much too ſhort on many intereſting articles; and his method, though he ſtudied it perhaps too much, is by no means happy; as he divides his work (which, indeed, moſt others do) into *centuries*, which is artificial and unnatural, and ſeparates the *proſperous* from the *calamitous* events, which ought to be related in their natural connexion.

Conſidering how unfavourable an impreſſion has been made upon many ſuperficial thinkers by what Mr. Gibbon has advanced

concerning

concerning the riſe and progreſs of chriſtianity, I alſo wiſhed to ſee a church hiſtory in which the facts ſhould be ſo ſtated, as of themſelves to ſupply an anſwer to his artful inſinuations. This is the beſt defence of chriſtianity, ſhewing that to eſtabliſh itſelf as it actually did, it muſt neceſſarily have been founded in truth. To aſſiſt my younger readers, I have made many obſervations of this kind.

Beſides demonſtrating the truth of chriſtianity, in this the beſt of all methods, by a ſimple exhibition of *facts*, I wiſhed to give young perſons more eſpecially an idea of the great *value* of chriſtianity, by ſhewing its influence on the minds of thoſe who firſt received it, and how nobly it led them to *think* and to *act*, raiſing them above the world, and all the honours and emoluments of it; how, for the great *hope that it ſet before them*, they chearfully ſubmitted to *bear the loſs of all things*, and made light of pain and death in every mode of torture. With this

this view I have been more particular than might have been expected from a hiſtory of this extent, in my account of the ancient *martyrdoms*; judging from myſelf, that no reading is ſo intereſting, or ſo uſeful. In Moſheim there is nothing of this kind. He only enumerates the perſecutions, without mentioning any of the *particulars*, and this will not intereſt the reader at all. But by dwelling a little on theſe particulars, I flatter myſelf that I have written ſuch a hiſtory as may not only be *conſulted*, but be *read*, eſpecially by young perſons. However, as I have not only divided the work into a great number of *periods*, but alſo into *ſections*, the ſubjects of which are diſtinctly ſpecified, any perſon may, without much trouble, ſelect, or omit, whatever he pleaſes.

In compoſing this work, as well as my *Hiſtory of Early Opinions concerning Chriſt*, I wrote immediately from *original writers*, and afterwards conſulted the moſt reſpectable of the moderns, by

by which means I have been able to ſupply ſome articles which I had overlooked, eſpecially, ſuch as are collected from works not profeſſedly hiſtorical. The authors thus referred to, I have never failed to conſult with reſpect to every thing of conſequence; and when I did not think that neceſſary, I have quoted the writers I have actually made uſe of; which, it will be ſeen, has only been with reſpect to articles which no perſon in this age can be ſuppoſed to have any motive to miſrepreſent; ſuch as the later accounts of the Donatiſts. So eſtabliſhed is the character of Dr. Lardner, for diligence and fidelity, that I have made no ſcruple, on ſeveral occaſions, to copy him, and make uſe of his tranſlations. By this means I have relieved myſelf when I could; but I have ſpared no labour which I thought neceſſary to make my work uſeful and authentic.

I call this hiſtory a *general* one, and not *particular*, or *critical*. Whatever appeared to me to ſavour of *fable*, I have commonly omitted, and without any diſcuſſion. The

ſame I have done with reſpect to *dates*, giving thoſe which appeared to me to be neareſt the truth, eſpecially thoſe ſupplied by Dr. Lardner. Not that I have any objection to the critical diſcuſſion of ſuch ſubjects. On the contrary, I often think them of importance, and I ſometimes take much pleaſure in entering into them, as may appear from the diſſertations prefixed to my *Harmony of the Goſpels*, and my friendly controverſy with the biſhop of Waterford, concerning the duration of Chriſt's miniſtry. But this was not my object in the preſent work, which I wiſhed to make intereſting to the generality of readers.

I have brought the hiſtory to a very important period, comprehending the great controverſies concerning the perſon of Chriſt, as ſettled by the four firſt general councils, and terminating with the removal of the power which ſtood in the way of that authority, temporal and ſpiritual, which was afterwards aſſumed by the biſhops of Rome, the progreſs of which will be the great object of the

the next diviſion of this work, if I continue it. But whether I ſhall purſue it any farther, I am wholly undetermined.

I have proceeded thus far, becauſe I thought that I was able to throw new and important light upon the ſubject. With reſpect to what follows, I do not know that I ſhall be able to do ſo much; but it may be pleaſing to ſome if I ſhould do no more than ſelect, and arrange, what has been already well done, ſo as to make a ſuitable continuation of this work to the reformation by Luther. If this ſhould appear to be the wiſh of many of my readers, I ſhall probably undertake it; and then, if I ſhould find myſelf at leiſure, I may in the ſame manner, write the hiſtory of the reformation itſelf, and even continue it to the preſent century. In the mean time, what I have now done I apprehend to be ſufficiently compleat of itſelf.

It is generally obſerved that *old age is narrative*. And certainly of all the kinds of com-

poſition, *hiſtory* beſt ſuits the later periods of life, the powers of *invention* diminiſhing, and thoſe of *reflection*, at leaſt a diſpoſition to reflect, increaſing. If I ſhould find this to be the caſe with myſelf, I ſhall be happy to have ſo pleaſing, and ſo uſeful, an employment in proſpect. For of all hiſtory, that of the mind of man, in the progreſs of *opinions*, and their conſequences, which is moſt conſpicuous in what relates to chriſtianity, will pleaſe me beſt. As we approach nearer to another ſtate, every thing that has any reference to it naturally proves more intereſting.

I am far from expecting that I, who have found errors in others, ſhould have eſcaped them myſelf. If any be pointed out to me, I ſhall be ready to rectify them in future editions of the work.

N. B. The dates annexed to the names of the biſhops of all the greater ſees in the chronlogical table, at the end of this work, are taken chiefly from the *Abregé chronologique de l'Hiſtoire Eccleſiaſtique*, 2 Vols.

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THE

INTRODUCTION.

IF we judge of the importance of events by the greatneſs of their effects, and their influence on the well being of mankind, we muſt conclude that no hiſtory whatever can be ſo intereſting as that of the riſe and progreſs of chriſtianity. The change which it has occaſioned in the world is unſpeakably more wonderful in its nature, than that which was brought about by the eſtabliſhment of any empire, from the beginning of the world to the preſent day; the Roman empire itſelf, which was of the greateſt extent, and the longeſt duration of any of them, not excepted. While they all, in their turns, have gone to decay and ruin, the kingdom of Chriſt is ſtill extending itſelf; ſo that we cannot doubt but that it will at length embrace all mankind, and continue to the end of time. With reſpect to the value of chriſtianity, it may with truth be ſaid, that it

raiſes man above man, even in his moſt civilized ſtate, unſpeakably more than men are by nature raiſed above brute animals. It forms them to true dignity of conduct in this life, and thus prepares them for that glorious and immortal life after death, with which it brings us acquainted.

This hiſtory is the more intereſting, as it exhibits this greateſt of all changes in the ſtate of the world, taking its riſe from the ſmalleſt beginnings, and triumphing, without the aid of external force, over all the powers that man could oppoſe to it.

Chriſtianity, though founded on mere opinion, viz. the belief of certain facts, ſuch as the miracles, death, and reſurrection of Chriſt, and the miracles performed by the apoſtles after him, produced viſible and moſt extraordinary *effects*, both with reſpect to religion, and even government; and the evidence of the facts was ſo clear and ſtriking, that the doctrines which were confirmed by it prevailed over every oppoſite ſyſtem of *opinions*, even thoſe which had taken the deepeſt root, and which had, from time immemorial, been connected with *practices* to which mankind had the greateſt attachment,

tachment, both from the faſcinating nature of the things themſelves, and the belief that the welfare of ſtates abſolutely depended upon them.

The religious worſhip of all the heathen world was what is properly termed mere *ſuperſtition*, being altogether founded on an ignorance of the true cauſes of things; and, conſequently, it led men to purſue certain ends by means which had no connexion with them; and it is not probable that any knowledge that they would ever have acquired of the real laws of nature would have been ſufficient to cure that ſuperſtition. It was either to the influence of the ſun, moon, and ſtars, the earth, and other viſible parts of nature, or to that of dead men (whoſe powers they imagined to be continued and enlarged after death) to which they had aſcribed all the good and evil which they could not otherwiſe account for; and, accordingly, theſe were the objects to which their religious worſhip had been directed. And being of courſe left to their own imaginations with reſpect to the methods of ſecuring the favour of thoſe deities, and naturally enough ſuppoſing that they were pleaſed with ſuch things as pleaſed

themſelves, it is no wonder (the fancies of men being infinitely various) that among other methods they had recourſe to acts, the object of which is to gratify ſenſuality or revenge, paſſions by which themſelves were chiefly ſwayed. Accordingly, ſome of their religious rites and ceremonies were of an expenſive and painful, and others of an alluring nature, conſiſting in the gratification of their ſenſual appetites; but purity of morals had never been the object of any religion of the heathens, and the little knowledge they had of a future ſtate (which had, no doubt, been derived from the tradition of ſome early revelation, miſerably corrupted) was ſuch as to have no influence on the conduct of even the lower claſſes of men, and was wholly diſregarded by the higher.

The Jews, a people inconſiderable with reſpect to number, power, or extent of territory (who, after being a flouriſhing and independent nation, had been held in ſubjection by all the great monarchies of antiquity, from the Babylonian to the Roman) had alone the benefit of a religion inſtituted by God himſelf, and proved to be ſo by ſuch interpoſitions of divine providence in their favour, eſpecially

eſpecially at the promulgation of it, as the inveterate obſtinacy and incredulity of that people had not been able to reſiſt, and to which, after many relapſes into idolatry, they were, in the time of our Saviour, moſt firmly attached. To the peculiar rites of their religion the generality of the nation, who were of the ſect of the Phariſees, had added many obſervances of their own invention, and on theſe they laid as much ſtreſs as on things of divine inſtitution; while a few of the richer ſort were of the ſect of the Sadducees, who not only rejected the traditions of the Phariſees, but diſbelieved the doctrine of the reſurrection.

The Jewiſh nation had been favoured with an almoſt uninterrupted ſucceſſion of prophets, from the time of Moſes to that of Malachi, a period of more than a thouſand years; but from that time there had been no prophets, nor any pretenſion to prophecy, for the ſpace of more than four hundred years, when Jeſus Chriſt, the founder of the chriſtian religion, immediately preceded by John the Baptiſt, roſe among them.

About the time of his appearance there was a general expectation among the Jews of the

coming of their *Meſſiah*, a perſon announced by the prophet Daniel under that title, which ſignifies one who is *anointed*, or appointed by God to an office of great dignity. But though it was expreſſly ſaid that the Meſſiah was to be *cut off*, the Jews ſeem to have given no attention to this circumſtance, but applied to him all that is ſaid of their future *prince of the houſe of David*, who is to reign over them when they ſhall be reſtored to their own country, and be the moſt diſtinguiſhed nation upon earth. They therefore imagined that, as they were then in ſubjection to the Romans, their Meſſiah would deliver them from that ſtate of ſervitude, and extend his conqueſts over the neighbouring countries, as David had done. The hiſtory of the Jews ſhews this expectation in the ſtrongeſt light, and our Saviour's conduct (and, as we may ſay, that of divine providence) was very much guided by it. For had Jeſus been from the firſt announced in the character of the Meſſiah, the Jews immediately connecting with it the idea of a temporal prince, and a conqueror (which he was not to be) much inconvenience would have ariſen from it, eſpecially with reſpect to the Romans, who, being

being maſters in the country, would have been jealous of ſuch a perſon.

Accordingly, when John, the forerunner of Jeſus, made his appearance, his commiſſion went no farther than to announce the ſpeedy approach of another perſon *much greater than himſelf*. Like many other prophets, he called upon his hearers to repent, and as a token, it ſhould ſeem, of a ſolemn promiſe to amend their lives, he by divine appointment required them to be baptized. Though John worked no miracles, he had, in his manner and dreſs ſo much the appearance of one of the ancient Jewiſh prophets, and the auſterity and ſanctity of his life gave ſuch a credit to what he taught, that he was generally received in the character of a prophet; and though the rulers of the nation, and the teachers of the law, whoſe hypocriſy and immoralities he inveighed againſt, took umbrage at his popularity, and had no faith in his divine miſſion, they durſt not openly avow their opinion.

The ſcene of John's preaching was at firſt in the wilderneſs of Judea, which was under the government of the Romans, but afterwards in the country beyond Jordan, which

was in the dominion of Herod, who reſpected him greatly. But the prophet having, with the liberty which became his character, reproved him for taking Herodias, the wife of his brother Philip, and who had eloped from him, Herod, on what pretence does not appear, put him in priſon; and Herodias, being highly incenſed againſt him, induced her huſband to give orders for his execution, taking advantage of a raſh promiſe which he had made, to give her daughter (who had pleaſed him by dancing at a public entertainment) whatever ſhe ſhould aſk, and prompting her to aſk the head of John. The preaching of John began in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius, in the year 28 of our preſent æra, and he was put to death in the year following.

PERIOD I.

FROM THE PUBLIC MINISTRY OF JESUS TO THE DEATH OF NERO. A.D. 68.

SECTION I.

From the public Appearance of Jeſus to his Aſcenſion. A.D. 29.

AT the death of John, Jeſus had preached ſome weeks, and had a conſiderable number of followers, out of whom he had juſt before appointed *twelve* to be his conſtant attendants; and from being commiſſioned to preach his religion in diſtant countries, he gave them the appellation of *apoſtles*. His public miniſtry commenced ſoon after his being baptized by John, which was immediately followed by a remarkable appearance of ſomething like the deſcent of a dove upon him, accompanied with an audible voice, ſaying,

This

This is my beloved Son; and this was the firſt intimation that John had who the perſon was whom he was ſent to announce.

After his baptiſm Jeſus was led by the ſpirit of God into the wilderneſs, where he continued forty days, as Moſes had done in the mount, without eating or drinking; and in this time it is probable that he received his inſtructions what to preach, and how to conduct himſelf in his important miſſion. After this followed what is called his *temptation*, which was probably a viſion, repreſenting the various trials to which he would be expoſed during the courſe of his miniſtry, guarding him particularly againſt oſtentation, ambition, and a diſtruſt of providence. After theſe ſcenes he lived for ſome time pretty much retired, as he had done before, though, no doubt employed in deep meditation on the ſubject of his important office, and preparing his mind for it by that fervent devotion, by which he was ever diſtinguiſhed.

Though, in conſequence of John's announcing him to be his ſuperior, a few of his diſciples attached themſelves to Jeſus, and occaſionally attended him, we have no account of any thing of conſequence being done by him (except

(except the miracle of changing water into wine at a private marriage feaſt, and this was probably in the autumn preceding) till after the paſſover which followed his baptiſm. But on his return to Galilee after this paſſover, he gave his whole time to the inſtruction of all who came in his way, and performed the moſt illuſtrious miracles, particularly omitting no opportunity of ſhewing his own benevolence, as well as proving his divine miſſion, by healing all the ſick that were brought to him. Thus, after publicly preaching in a ſynagogue at Capernaum on the ſabbath-day, he cured a demoniac who was preſent on the occaſion, and on the ſame day Peter's wife's mother, who was ill of a fever, and in the evening a multitude of perſons, afflicted with diſeaſes of various kinds.

Theſe cures brought about him ſo great a concourſe of people, that early the next morning he left the town in a private manner, and went into the mountainous part of the country; and the people ſtill flocking to him, from all the places in the neighbourhood, he gave them moſt excellent inſtructions on the ſubject of morals, inſiſting chiefly on good diſpoſitions of heart, upright intentions, and

and univerſal benevolence, even to thoſe who ſhould hate and perſecute them; and being well apprized of the general expectation of his countrymen, concerning the coming of the Meſſiah, and the ambitious proſpects they entertained on that account, he enlarged particularly on the virtues of meekneſs, humility, and heavenly mindedneſs, as the moſt eſſential qualifications for that *kingdom of God* for the eſtabliſhment of which they were looking. Knowing alſo the deference they had for the ſcribes, the public teachers of the law, he ſtrongly guarded them againſt the abuſes and corruptions which they had introduced into it by their traditions.

The doctrine which he taught with the greateſt diſtinctneſs and emphaſis was that of a future *reſurrection to immortal life*, as that which he was more eſpecially commiſſioned to republiſh with additional evidence: informing his hearers that he himſelf was appointed of God to come again, after his death and reſurrection, to raiſe all the dead, and to judge the world. This moſt important of all doctrines was probably the original revelation of God to man, but not being explicitly contained in the writings of Moſes, whoſe commiſſion had another

other object, the record of it was loſt*; and in conſequence of this, though the belief of it was retained by the body of the Jewiſh nation, it was diſbelieved by ſome, and much corrupted by others; the Phariſees particularly, imagining that men were to have wives in a future ſtate, and live in other reſpects as they had done here. Beſides correcting this miſtake, and informing us that, in the future world, men are to be as the angels of God, and to live without propagating their ſpecies, Jeſus

* We find the belief of a reſurrection among the Jews in the time of our Saviour, and in that of the Maccabees long before him, ſo that it was probably the faith of that nation in all former times, as it continues to be ſo to this day. Our Saviour only corrected ſome miſtakes concerning it. Now this is a doctrine of ſo extraordinary a nature, that it could never have been diſcovered, or even imagined, by men, and therefore muſt have been derived from ſome revelation. And as we have no account of ſuch a revelation in the ſcriptures of the Old Teſtament, it muſt have been prior to the writing of any of thoſe books; though, being well known to the writers, and to the nation in general, it has ſo happened that they have not mentioned it. Had a diſcovery of ſo great importance been made to mankind after the time of Moſes, or indeed after the flood, and before the Babyloniſh captivity, we ſhould certainly have had ſome account of it in the Old Teſtament; this being of infinitely more moment than any thing recorded there.

taught no peculiar articles of faith. In every thing that was of importance, ſuch as the unity of God, and the placability of his nature, the Jews had been ſufficiently inſtructed by Moſes and the prophets. Theſe, therefore, he aſſumed as fixed principles; and in all his diſcourſes and parables, which were admirably calculated to ſtrike the imagination, and to impreſs the memory and the heart, the truth of them was taken for granted, as what would be admitted by all his hearers. The pure morality that he taught was uniformly exemplified in his own life, which was a pattern of the greateſt moderation, benevolence, and piety. He declined no labour, in continually going about doing good; he made no oſtentatious diſplay of his miraculous powers; he ſpent much of his time in humble prayer; and upon all occaſions teſtified his entire ſubmiſſion to the will of God.

It is not a little remarkable that, though Jeſus plainly and repeatedly informed his diſciples that he ſhould be put to death, and riſe again on the third day, they did not underſtand him; ſtill ſuppoſing that, as he was the Meſſiah, he would ſoon appear in the character of a king; and they were more

than once diſputing among themſelves who ſhould enjoy the chief places of honour and power in his kingdom. But as he was uſed to ſpeak to them in a figurative manner, they probably thought that by *death* he meant ſome ſcenes of difficulty and trial, and that his ſurmounting them was all that was meant by his *reſurrection*. For when he was apprehended, and put to death, they gave up all their expectations from him, never ſuppoſing that they ſhould ſee him any more; and when he did appear to them, after his reſurrection, they could hardly believe the intereſting fact on the evidence of their own ſenſes.

The miracles of Jeſus were chiefly of a benevolent nature, conſiſting of healing diſeaſes, and eſpecially ſuch as were ſeldom known to be relieved by medicine, at leaſt in a ſhort ſpace of time, as blindneſs, leproſy, palſy, and inſanity, which in that age was uſually aſcribed to the influence of demons, and there are three accounts of his raiſing perſons from the dead. To relieve the wants of his auditors, in a place where no proviſions were to be had, he twice fed a great multitude with a ſmall quantity of bread and fiſhes,

more

more being left than there was when he began to diſtribute.

A few of his miracles ſeem to have had no other object than to ſhew the power that was given him over the laws of nature, as his ſtilling a tempeſt, and walking on the ſea, as well as his changing water into wine, mentioned before. Miracles of this kind, however, would tend to inſpire his diſciples with the greateſt confidence in the divine power which attended him, and encourage them in preaching his religion, notwithſtanding all the dangers to which they ſhould be expoſed; perſuaded that, if they were not delivered from any particular diſtreſs, it was becauſe the intereſt of the religion they taught made their ſufferings more expedient. And their maſter had always forewarned them that they were not to expect their reward in this world. On the contrary, he plainly told them that none would be conſidered as his diſciples, who would not be ready to give up their lives rather than renounce their religion; and that if any perſon ſhould deny him, or be aſhamed of him, in any circumſtances, he would deny him to be his diſciple when he ſhould come in his glory.

Beſides

Beſides the voice from heaven at the baptiſm of Jeſus, he had a more expreſs divine atteſtation of the ſame kind upon a mountain in Galilee, in the preſence of three of his apoſtles, Peter, James, and John; when he appeared in great glory, ſurrounded by that bright cloud which was the ſymbol of the divine preſence in the time of Moſes, accompanied by Moſes himſelf and Elias, who diſcourſed with him about his future ſufferings, probably to encourage him to go through a ſcene ſo painful and humiliating, and at the ſame time ſo ſingular in its kind; as he was to exemplify in his own perſon the doctrine which he taught, viz. of a reſurrection to immortal life, being, as he is called, *the firſt fruits from the dead*. This remarkable ſcene was cloſed with a repetition of the voice from heaven, Matt. xvii. 5. *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleaſed, Hear ye him.* Alſo a few days before his death, when being in the temple, in the preſence of a great number of people, and praying, he had ſaid, *Father, glorify thy name*, John xii. 28. *there came a voice from heaven, ſaying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again.* This voice was ſo loud, that ſome of the people who were

not near enough to diſtinguiſh the words, thought that it thundered, but others, perceiving the ſounds to be articulate, ſaid that an angel ſpake to him.

Notwithſtanding the ſplendor of his miracles, Jeſus was far from arrogating any thing to himſelf, but always aſcribed his extraordinary works to his God and Father, who ſent him, and acted by him, and to whoſe will he was at all times perfectly reſigned. Together with ſentiments of the moſt genuine piety, he diſcovered evident marks of great ſenſibility of mind, and of a tender compaſſionate diſpoſition; feeling for his diſciples and others, and attending to them much more than to himſelf. Thus when he accompanied the friends of Lazarus to his grave, and ſaw them in tears, he wept alſo, though he was juſt going to raiſe him from the dead. When little children were brought to him, he not only bleſſed them, but took them up in his arms to do it. Foretelling the ruin that was to come upon his nation, and eſpecially the deſtruction of the city of Jeruſalem (which, as a prophet, he had particularly deſcribed) and viewing it from ſome diſtance, he wept over it; and as he was led

to crucifixion, he bid the women who accompanied him, and lamented over him, not to weep for him, but for themſelves, and for their children, on account of the calamities that would certainly befal them.

Notwithſtanding the great and benevolent works, continually performed by Jeſus, and his popularity with the common people on that account; yet, as he paid no court to the leading men of the nation, but, on the contrary, omitted no opportunity of expoſing their ambition and other vices, and frequently upbraided them before the people, whoſe good opinion they affected, he incurred their utmoſt indignation. Their prejudices would not ſuffer them to believe that ſuch a perſon as he was could be their promiſed Meſſiah, and they aſcribed the moſt wonderful of his works, that of curing demoniacs (and probably the reſt alſo) to the power of Satan. Thus blinded by their paſſions, after many conſultations what to do, they determined to put him to death, and at length reſolved to do it by a public trial and execution. As this muſt have been effected by the Roman power, they could not doubt but the ſame power, if they could engage it's interference in the caſe,

would ſupport them in the meaſure, and carry them through it in all its conſequences.

This purpoſe of theirs was favoured by the baſe treachery of Judas Iſcariot, one of his apoſtles, who had been offended at a reproof which Jeſus gave him, when he had complained of the expence of a quantity of valuable ointment, which Mary the ſiſter of Lazarus had poured upon his head, at the laſt entertainment at which he was preſent. Judas had perhaps given up all idea of Jeſus being a king, or, at leaſt, of any great advantage accruing to himſelf from adhering to him, and in a fit of reſentment (which, however, laſted ſome days) he agreed with the chief rulers, for a ſum of money, to ſhew them how they might apprehend him without alarming the multitude, and by night; ſo that, however diſpoſed, the common people would have no opportunity of interfering in his behalf. It was accordingly done about midnight, in a garden, at a ſmall diſtance from the city, whither Jeſus, diſtinctly foreſeeing all that was coming upon him, had retired to paſs the dreadful interval in prayer. Feeling like a man under the fulleſt view of his approaching painful death, and all the igno-

ignominious circumſtances attending it, he was for a time in an agony of diſtreſs; through the whole of which he however preſerved a purpoſe, never for a moment to be ſhaken, of abſolute reſignation to the will of God; and after this he perfectly recovered the compoſure of his mind, and it never quitted him to the laſt.

Being apprehended by an armed force, after ſhewing that it was in his power to have reſcued himſelf, he ſubmitted to be conducted to the houſe of the high prieſt, and then before the ſanhedrim, the chief court of judicature in the country, which was aſſembled for the purpoſe in the precincts of the temple. There, not knowing what charge to bring againſt him, on which they could ſentence him to death, his judges haſtily took up that of *blaſphemy*, accuſing him of ſpeaking lightly of the temple, which they might think was moſt likely to deſtroy his intereſt with the common people. But not being able to prove this charge, the high prieſt, who preſided in the court, ſolemnly aſked him whether he was the Meſſiah; and upon his acknowledging it, the majority of them voted his death, on the idea of his having arrogated to himſelf

a high office from God which did not belong to him. On this Judas, who had betrayed him, was ſtruck with ſuch remorſe, that he immediately went into the court, threw down the money that he had received as the reward of his ſervices in apprehending him, ſaying, *I have betrayed innocent blood*, and then went and hanged himſelf. There could be no greater proof of the innocence of Jeſus, and that his diſciples, who were the beſt acquainted with his conduct, knew of no evil in him.

Notwithſtanding this condemnation, the Jews, being ſubject to the Romans, had not the power of executing their ſentence, and therefore accuſed him to Pilate the Roman governor, of treaſon againſt the ſtate, in aſſuming the character of a *king*, for ſuch, in their opinion, the Meſſiah was. Pilate ſaw the malice of the Jews, and the perfect innocence of Jeſus; but wiſhing to gain favour with the leading men of the nation, whom nothing leſs than the death of Jeſus would ſatisfy, after doing every thing that he could to ſave him (at leaſt to expreſs his perſuaſion of his innocence) he gave orders for his crucifixion, which was the mode of death for which

which the Jews had been particularly clamorous, it being that to which the Romans had been uſed to ſentence the moſt infamous criminals.

This ſcene of a painful and lingering death, preceded by a cruel ſcourging, and every mode of inſult and abuſe, both by the officers of the Jews, and the Roman ſoldiers, Jeſus went through (as he had done both his trials) with the moſt perfect compoſure, and without expreſſing any reſentment. And this is the more extraordinary, as his preceding agony in the garden ſhewed that he was poſſeſſed of the moſt exquiſite ſenſibility. He had even the benevolence and preſence of mind to pray for his executioners, that God would forgive them, ſince *they knew not what they did*, and only executed the orders of their ſuperiors. When he hung upon the croſs, with that affection to his friends of which he had given the greateſt proofs in all his converſation with them on the evening before his death, and which never forſook him, he committed his mother to the care of his diſciple John; and in his laſt words reſigned his life into the hands of his God and Father,

who, he was confident, would ſoon reſtore it to him again.

This tranquility, with which he ſubmitted to death, is an evidence of his firm aſſurance of riſing again; and as the hiſtory of his life, and eſpecially of the laſt ſcenes of it, clearly proved that he was no *enthuſiaſt*, it may be pronounced a tranquility which could never have been attained by any man, in thoſe circumſtances, without the beſt grounded perſuaſion of the truth of his divine miſſion. His whole behaviour ſhewed ſuch dignity of ſentiment, ſuch benevolence, and piety, as is incompatible with either a weak or a wicked mind. No enthuſiaſt, or impoſtor, could have conducted himſelf as he did; and they muſt either have given no attention to the incidents, or be utter ſtrangers to the feelings of human nature, who can ſuppoſe that he was either the one or the other.

The manner in which Jeſus died was peculiarly favourable to the deſign of providence, which was to make the moſt diſtinguiſhed preacher of the doctrine of a reſurrection himſelf a proof of the fact. He died in public, and by the hands of his enemies, to whom he

was delivered up to for that purpoſe. The reality of his death therefore could not be queſtioned, and his reſurrection was proved by the abundant evidence of thoſe who beſt knew him, and who were therefore the beſt judges of the fact, and who had no more expectation of it than his adverſaries, and accordingly expreſſed as much ſurprize at it as they could have done. On this moſt unexceptionable evidence is the great truth of the reſurrection of Chriſt moſt firmly eſtabliſhed. The moſt difficult to be convinced of it were the apoſtles themſelves. When they were informed that he had actually appeared to ſome very reſpectable women of their acquaintance, they treated the report as an idle tale, and did not believe it. One of them was ſo unreaſonably incredulous, that the teſtimony of ten of his brother apoſtles would not ſatisfy him, nor any thing leſs than his own ſeeing and handling his riſen maſter.

Jeſus continued after his reſurrection to appear to his diſciples, at intervals, for the ſpace of forty days, ſo that there was ſufficient time for them to recollect themſelves and to ſatisfy themſelves with reſpect to the fact, in whatever manner they ſhould think proper.

His

His firſt appearances were made when they did not expect him, and therefore could not impoſe upon themſelves by their vain hopes, and others were by expreſs appointment, when they had ſufficient opportunity for conſidering what would ſatisfy them, and of procuring that ſatisfaction at their full leiſure; and the conſequence was ſuch a firm perſuaſion in them all, of the actual reſurrection of their maſter, and conſequently of the truth of his promiſes concerning his ſecond coming, to raiſe the dead and judge the world (when they would again enjoy his ſociety, in a ſtate of happineſs and glory which would have no end) as carried them through difficulties and ſufferings as great as he himſelf had experienced, and gave ſuch an eſtabliſhment to the chriſtian religion, as that nothing in the power of its moſt violent enemies, and of the world, could overturn it.

Jeſus firſt ſhewed himſelf to Mary Magdalen, who was ſo far from expecting ſuch an interview, that ſhe was one of thoſe who had been at great expence in purchaſing ſpices to embalm him, and when ſhe firſt ſaw him took him to be the gardener. Before this, on finding the ſepulchre open, ſhe had run and told

told the apoſtles of ſuch an unſuſpected circumſtance, and Peter and John had ſet out together to go to the place; when John, outrunning Peter, and going into the ſepulchre, judged, from the manner in which he ſaw the grave cloaths diſpoſed of, that the body had not been carried away by force, but that there had been a real reſurrection. Peter, however, does not ſeem to have been convinced of it till Jeſus appeared to himſelf, which he did ſometime on that day, after he had firſt appeared to Mary Magdalen, and by her had ſent a meſſage to the apoſtles, informing them that he would give them the meeting in Galilee.

After this he appeared to two of the diſciples as they were walking to a village in the neighbourhood of Jeruſalem. The ſame evening he appeared, as unexpectedly, to all the apoſtles, except Thomas; the Sunday following to him with them, and ſometime after in Galilee to Peter, and others who were in a ſhip fiſhing, and then to five hundred of the diſciples at once. He alſo appeared ſeparately to James, but when or where is not certain. Laſtly, he met the apoſtles, and many others, after their return to Jeruſalem;

lem; and having converſed with them at leiſure, and conducted them as far as the mount of Olives, he aſcended above the clouds in their ſight; two angels ſtanding by, and informing thoſe who were preſent, that in the ſame manner in which they then ſaw Jeſus going up to heaven, they would ſee him return again from heaven.

The enemies of chriſtianity frequently aſk why Jeſus did not appear to the leading men of the Jewiſh nation, after he was riſen from the dead. But conſidering the part which they had acted, this would have had the appearance of an inſult, unbecoming the dignity of our Lord's character; and the evidence of his reſurrection, which, if they had been ſo diſpoſed, they might eaſily have made themſelves acquainted with, was ſufficient to ſatisfy all who were truly unprejudiced. Beſides, had ſuch an appearance as unbelievers now demand actually convinced all the Jewiſh rulers, and the whole nation, ſo that they had all immediately become chriſtians, the ſtory would have been leſs credible at this day, and in all future time. For it might then have been ſaid, with great plauſibility, that the whole might have been a fabrication of the Jews,

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and that the evidence of the reſurrection of Jeſus had never been rigorouſly examined at the time. But no ſuch objection can now be made to this important part of the chriſtian hiſtory. It is now evident that it was the intereſt both of the friends and of the enemies of chriſtianity to examine moſt rigorouſly into the truth of the reſurrection, and that the belief of it continued to gain ground notwithſtanding. They who were then the enemies of chriſtianity would no doubt have refuted the ſtory if it had been in their power; and being the leading men of the country, they had every advantage for ſo doing; and, on the other hand, the friends of chriſtianity would not have ſacrificed their fortunes, their liberty, and their lives, for the truth of a fact, of which they had not had the moſt convincing evidence.

SECT-

SECTION. II.

From the Aſcenſion of Jeſus to the Converſion of Paul.

THE direction that Jeſus gave to his diſciples before his aſcenſion was, that they ſhould continue at Jeruſalem till they ſhould receive the gift of the holy ſpirit, and be thereby *endued with power from on high*. In conſequence of this, they aſſociated together, to the number of about one hundred and twenty, and at the motion of Peter, they, by prayer and caſting of lots, choſe Matthias to ſucceed Judas in the office of apoſtle, there being another candidate, whoſe name was Joſeph called alſo Barſabas, and ſurnamed Juſtus. The requiſites to the office of apoſtle were their having attended Jeſus from the beginning of his miniſtry till his aſcenſion, and eſpecially their having been witneſſes of his reſurrection. Acts i. 26.

On the day of pentecoſt, ten days after the aſcenſion, the apoſtles and other diſciples being aſſembled as uſual in one room, pretty early in the morning, the promiſe of their

maſter

maſter was fulfilled, by what was called *the deſcent of the holy ſpirit* upon them all. There was a ſound as of a *ruſhing mighty wind*, filling the whole houſe, and the appearance of fire upon the heads of all the company, followed by a power of ſpeaking in languages which they had not learned, and ſo intelligibly, that a great multitude of various nations, drawn together by the report, perfectly underſtood what they ſaid; and were aſtoniſhed above meaſure to hear perſons who were well known to be Galileans, and unlearned, ſpeak the praiſes of God in ſuch a variety of languages.

Some of the croud, who were probably ignorant of any language except their own, hearing voices that were unintelligible to them, ſaid that the diſciples were drunk. But Peter, who heard this remark, began to ſpeak to the multitude, and obſerve, that what they had heard could not be the effect of drunkenneſs, becauſe it was early in the day, when it was not cuſtomary for any perſons to be intoxicated. This was a proper anſwer to thoſe who did not underſtand the languages in which the diſciples ſpoke. Others muſt have been abundantly convinced, that the effect of intoxication could not be the diſtinct

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ſpeaking of languages which men had never learned.

After this, Peter, informing them that the ſcene at which they were preſent was an event foretold by the prophet Joel, began to aſſure them of the reſurrection of Jeſus, whom they had crucified, of which himſelf and all his company were witneſſes; and that it was in fulfilment of his promiſe that, being now exalted at the right hand of God, he had imparted to them this gift of the holy ſpirit. In confirmation of their evidence of the reſurrection, he likewiſe obſerved that it was agreeable to the ſcriptures, that the Meſſiah ſhould die and riſe again. Of this event he ſaid that they, who were the beſt acquainted with him, and had repeatedly ſeen and converſed with him, were the moſt proper witneſſes; but as to his *miracles* whilſt he was alive, and which proved him to be a prophet (or as he expreſſed himſelf, *a man approved of God, by miracles and wonders, and ſigns which God, did by him*) he appealed to themſelves, ſince they had been wrought among them, and had never been queſtioned. After this he exhorted them to repent of their ſins, and to be baptized; aſſuring them that then they would receive the

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ſame gift of the holy ſpirit which had been imparted to himſelf and his companions.

Such an effect was produced by this extraordinary appearance, and the ſpeech of Peter, appealing to their own perfect knowledge of the miracles of Jeſus, that about three thouſand perſons openly joined them and were baptized, making one body with them; and to expreſs their harmony and fellowſhip, the rich freely imparted of their ſuperfluity to the poor, and many of them even ſold their eſtates, to make a common ſtock for that benevolent purpoſe. From this time many miracles (though they are not particularly ſpecified in the hiſtory) being wrought by the apoſtles, numbers were proſelyted every day; and their behaviour was ſo irreproachable, that they were held in high eſteem by thoſe of the people who did not openly join them. Acts ii.

Nothing of this, it is eaſy to obſerve, could poſſibly have taken place, if it had been in the power of the chief rulers, and the enemies of Jeſus, to have denied either his miracles, or thoſe of the apoſtles, and eſpecially if they could have refuted their account of his reſurrection. That they would have done every

thing that was in their power to diſprove all theſe, we cannot doubt, when we conſider how inveterate they had juſt before ſhewn themſelves againſt Jeſus; carrying their rage ſo far as to cauſe him to be put to death, though they could prove nothing criminal againſt him. In theſe circumſtances, the miracles of Chriſt and of the apoſtles being unqueſtioned, and the teſtimony of ſuch a number of perſons, the moſt competent witneſſes of the reſurrection of Jeſus, being unanimous, and uncontradicted, it is no wonder that new converts were continually made; and that the heads of the nation were for a time over-awed, and made no oppoſition, though they were ſtung with mortification, and filled with rage. At the ſame time it muſt be obſerved, that the ſtrong prejudice in favour of the Meſſiah being a temporal prince, affecting the common people as well as their rulers, nothing but the moſt irreſiſtible evidence could have made them abandon ſo favourite an idea, and openly profeſs their faith in the meſſiahſhip of a man who had been crucified, and whom they could not expect to ſee any more in this world.

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Some time after, as Peter and John were going into the temple, at the time of evening prayer (or our three in the afternoon) a man known to have been a cripple from his birth, and who ſat day after day at the gate of the temple to aſk alms, begged their charity, as well as that of others who were entering into the temple. On this, Peter, looking earneſtly on him, and feeling, no doubt, a divine impulſe on his mind, ſaid "Silver and gold I "have none, but ſuch as I have give I thee. "In the name of Jeſus Chriſt of Nazareth "riſe up and walk;" immediately on which the poor man finding that he had the perfect uſe of his limbs, leaped up, and ſtood upright; going with them into the temple, ſhewing the greateſt agility, and praiſing God.

This being done in the preſence of a great multitude, who well knew the condition he had been in (for he was forty years old, and his diſeaſe ſuch as was evidently incurable by any natural means) and were therefore ſatiſfied that a real miracle had been wrought, Peter improved the occaſion to addreſs them to the ſame purport as before, informing them that it was by no power of *his own* that the man who then ſtood before them had been

healed, but by that power of God, by which he confirmed the divine miſſion of Jeſus, whom they had killed, but whom God had raiſed to life; of which Peter again aſſured them that he and his brethren were witneſſes; and that, this Jeſus being now aſcended into heaven, would continue there till the time of the reſtitution of all things. Many of the perſons preſent were greatly impreſſed by his diſcourſe, and made public profeſſion of the chriſtian faith, ſo that then the number of the diſciples, excluſive of the women among them, was about five thouſand. Acts iii. 4.

The governor of the temple, and the Sadducees, ſeeing the crowds in the place, and being exceedingly mortified at theſe effects of the preaching of the apoſtles, could not reſtrain themſelves any longer, and apprehended them. It being then evening, they were brought the next morning before the high-prieſt and the council, who aſked them by what power, and by what name, they had cured this man. On this Peter boldly addreſſed the court, and told them that it was by the name of Jeſus Chriſt of Nazareth, whom they had crucified, but whom God had raiſed from the dead, that the cure had been effected;

effected; intimating that it was the power of God giving teſtimony to his divine miſſion and theirs.

The court ſeeing the boldneſs of Peter and John, whom they knew to be unlearned men, and not uſed to ſpeak in public, and the miracle being unqueſtionable (the man upon whom it had been wrought being preſent) were a little diſconcerted, and ordered the apoſtles to withdraw, while they conferred upon the ſubject. Not being able to deny the fact, they agreed upon nothing but to charge them not to preach any more in the name of Jeſus. But Peter and John having received this injunction, openly refuſed to pay any regard to it, and appealed to themſelves, whether they ought not to obey God, by whoſe authority they preached, rather than man. Unable to make any reply to this, the judges only repeated their threats, without venturing to inflict any puniſhment upon them; being reſtrained by their fear of the people, who *glorified God for what was done*. Acts iv. 21.

Being thus diſmiſſed, the apoſtles went to their brethren, and gave them an account of all that had paſſed, on which they joined in

ſolemn prayer and thankſgiving to God; when to encourage them the more, the room in which they were aſſembled was ſhaken again, as it had been on the day of pentecoſt, and they were all filled with the holy ſpirit as at the firſt; ſo that they preached the goſpel, or the doctrine of the reſurrection and meſſiahſhip of Jeſus, with all boldneſs, notwithſtanding the threats of the rulers, who at that time durſt not put them in execution.

The infant church, enjoying this peace, went on increaſing in numbers and in the exerciſe of every virtue, with an ardour peculiar to that new ſtate of things, in which all who openly embraced chriſtianity, with very few exceptions, did it from principle, and with a determination to poſtpone every other conſideration to that of their new profeſſion. Conſidering themſelves as heirs of future glory and immortality, they devoted all their time, talents, and fortune to the public cauſe. One inſtance in particular is mentioned, that of Barnabas, a Levite, and a native of Cyprus; who having an eſtate in that iſland, ſold it, and gave the value of it to the apoſtles, to go to the common ſtock. Acts iv. 36.

Notwith-

Notwithſtanding the genuine zeal, uprightneſs, and integrity, of the great body of chriſtians in this early period, we have in it an example of one man and his wife, viz. Ananias and Sapphira, who either with a view to acquire the reputation of diſintereſtedneſs, or on the pretence of giving up their all, to avail themſelves of the common fund, ſold an eſtate, and bringing to the apoſtles part of the price, told them that it was the whole. As it was of great conſequence that the chriſtian church ſhould not at this time harbour any perſons of ſuch a character, it pleaſed the divine Being to make a ſignal example of theſe perſons, who had agreed in the intended fraud.

Ananias was firſt publicly called upon by Peter, to ſay whether the ſum which he had brought in was the whole price of his eſtate; and upon his ſaying that it was, Peter (prompted no doubt by the ſpirit of God) charged him with hypocriſy, and attempting to deceive not only man, but God. He then expoſtulated with him on the uſeleſſneſs of the lie he had told, as he had been under no neceſſity either to ſell his eſtate, or to give any part of it after it was ſold. Immediately

upon this, Ananias fell down dead before the company. A little time after this, his wife coming in before ſhe had been informed of any thing that had paſſed reſpecting her huſband, was aſked the ſame queſtion that had been put to him, and giving the ſame anſwer, ſhe alſo fell down dead. A miracle of this awful kind could not fail to make a deep impreſſion upon all. It would tend to convince all people that the profeſſion of chriſtianity was a ſerious thing, and thoſe who had any ſiniſter views would be deterred from joining the body of chriſtians. Acts v.

At this time the miniſtry of the apoſtles was honoured in as diſtinguiſhing a manner as that of Chriſt had been, many miracles being wrought by the apoſtles, and eſpecially by Peter, who always took the lead among them. Such was the fame of his miracles, that perſons *brought their ſick into the ſtreets, and laid them on beds and couches, that at leaſt the ſhadow of Peter might reach ſome of them.* Great numbers alſo came from towns in the neighbourhood of Jeruſalem, bringing their ſick, and among them dæmoniacs; and none of them returned without a perfect cure.

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This could not be done without exciting the rage of the rulers of the nation, whoſe prejudices were ſuch as nothing could conciliate. They therefore cauſed the apoſtles to be apprehended, and put into the common priſon. But this was the occaſion of a new miracle, and of a moſt extraordinary kind. For an angel opened the priſon doors, and leading them out, bade them go, and preach openly in the temple, the place of greateſt concourſe, as they had done before. This accordingly they did not fail to do; and to the great ſurprize of their judges, when they were aſſembled the next morning, and had given orders for their priſoners to be brought before them, they were told that the very perſons whom they had confined the day before, were at that very time teaching openly in the temple.

After this the judges could not think of attempting to take them any more by force. Indeed, the apoſtles were then ſo popular, that the officers would have been ſtoned if they had laid violent hands upon them. They therefore brought them without violence into the court, where being charged with acting contrary to the orders that had been given them,

them (viz. *not to preach any more in the name of Jeſus*) Peter replied, that he had obeyed God in what he had done, and again aſſerted the dignity of Jeſus, whom they had crucified, as riſen from the dead, and advanced to the right hand of God. He added, that not only were he and his brethren witneſſes of the reſurrection, but the ſpirit of God himſelf, in the miraculous powers which were imparted to all the believers.

Being provoked to the higheſt degree by this bold anſwer, the judges were thinking to put the apoſtles to death, as they had done Jeſus; but Gamaliel, one of their body, and a celebrated teacher of the law, adviſed them (after the apoſtles were withdrawn) not to interfere in the buſineſs, ſaying, that if the thing was of God, it would be in vain for them to oppoſe it, and if it was not, it would ſoon come to nothing. It ſeems, however, that the judges thought it neceſſary not to diſmiſs them without doing ſomething to enforce their authority. They therefore ordered them to be beaten, which was always done in open court. In this the apoſtles even rejoiced, and leaving the tribunal, they preached the goſpel with as much zeal as ever, both publicly

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in the temple, and alſo in private houſes. Acts v.

The Jewiſh rulers, being probably confounded at this unexpected boldneſs of the apoſtles, and their own ineffectual attempts to reſtrain them, ſeem to have followed the advice of Gamaliel for ſome time, and to have ſuffered them to preach without moleſtation; and this was attended with a great increaſe of the diſciples, not only in Jeruſalem and Judea, but among Jews in diſtant countries. For we find the widows of Grecians, as well as of Hebrews (Acts vi. 1.) applying for relief out of the common fund, and the former complaining that they were neglected out of reſpect to the latter. On this the apoſtles, who, like Moſes in a ſimilar ſituation, had given their attention to every thing that concerned chriſtianity, and had even ſuperintended this diſtribution, relieved themſelves of that burden, by requeſting that the ſociety would chuſe ſeven men of reputation among them, to attend to this and other ſecular affairs, while they confined themſelves to the buſineſs of preaching and inſtruction. This propoſal being approved of, the following ſeven perſons were choſen,

viz.

viz. Stephen, Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas, a proſelyte of Antioch. Theſe were ſet apart for their office by prayer, and the apoſtles ſolemnly laying their hands upon them; an action which always ſeems to have accompanied praying for particular perſons.

In this ſtate of things the number of the diſciples continued to increaſe greatly (Acts vi. 7.) and the converts were not all of them of the meaner kind of people, but a great number of prieſts joined their ſociety. In this ſtate it is probable that things continued ſome time, perhaps from A. D. 29, in which Chriſt died, to A. D. 33, when chriſtianity muſt have gotten a pretty firm eſtabliſhment; ſo that its enemies, the Jewiſh rulers, muſt have perceived that their forbearance had not been at all favourable to them. They had, therefore, recourſe once more to ſeverity, taking occaſion from the great zeal of Stephen, one of the ſeven deacons; who not confining his attention to ſecular matters, but having exerted himſelf alſo in preaching (which was accompanied with many miracles) drew upon himſelf the particular indignation of the oppoſite party; who might alſo think

think that they ſhould ſucceed better in the proſecution of him, who was an inferior perſon, than they had done in that of the apoſtles.

This freſh perſecution could not have been carried on without the connivance of Pilate, the Roman governor; but as he had before abandoned Jeſus to them, and his conduct in other reſpects had rendered him very unpopular, it is probable that, in hope of gaining them in ſome meaſure, and preventing their complaints of his mal-adminiſtration, he was willing to ſacrifice to them the followers of Jeſus, as he had done Jeſus himſelf. Beſides, he muſt by this time have ſeen that the chriſtians were a paſſive inoffenſive ſet of men, who were not likely to act openly againſt him, either by their complaints at Rome, or their oppoſition in the province.

The zealous Jews, having nothing to apprehend from the interference of the governor, now gave full ſcope to their rage in the perſecution of the chriſtians; and Stephen happening to be engaged in a diſpute with ſome zealous Jews (among whom were ſome from Cilicia, and among them, probably, Saul of Tarſus) and overpowering them with his arguments, they, knowing no other method

thod of ſilencing him, and ſenſible that the Sanhedrim was in their favour, accuſed him before that court of the crime of *blaſphemy againſt Moſes and againſt God*, ſuborning certain perſons, who declared that they had heard him ſay that Jeſus of Nazareth would deſtroy the city of Jeruſalem, and change the laws of Moſes.

Inſtead of replying to this particular accuſation, which was deſtitute of all proof, Stephen, with perfect preſence of mind, and with a countenance ſo full of courage and zeal, that it was compared to that of an angel, in a ſpeech of conſiderable length, recited the hiſtory of the Hebrew nation from the beginning; ſhewing his judges how apt they had always been to reject and ill-treat the meſſengers whom God had from time to time ſent to them, and boldly telling them, they were now treading in the ſteps of their anceſtors, by rejecting Jeſus Chriſt, in the murder of whom they had reſiſted God himſelf, who ſpake by him.

On hearing theſe keen but juſt reproaches, the members of the court, unable to contain themſelves any longer, paſſed ſentence of death upon him, as a blaſphemer. But he,

unmoved by this determination, and directing his eyes upwards, was favoured with a view of the glory of God, and of Jeſus Chriſt ſitting at his right hand. On his declaring this, they ſtopped their ears, as at the hearing of blaſphemy, and with the moſt indecent haſte and violence hurried him to a place out of the city, where he was ſtoned to death; while he, with perfect compoſure (according to the cuſtom of dying perſons addreſſing their neareſt friends) ſaid aloud (the viſion he had had impreſſing his mind and occupying all his thoughts) "Lord Jeſus, receive my ſpirit," or laſt breath, adding in the temper of his dying maſter, "Lord, lay not this ſin to their charge;" after which, with as much apparent ſatisfaction and tranquility as if he was falling aſleep, he expired. His friends were permitted to carry him away, and bury him with the uſual ceremonies of lamentation, which was very great. The chief actor in this tragedy was Saul, of Tarſus in Cilicia, and at his feet the perſons who threw the ſtones laid their cloaths, which they put off that they might not be incumbered in throwing them. Acts vii.

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The enemies of chriſtianity having ſucceeded in accompliſhing the death of Stephen, were encouraged to perſevere in the perſecution of the diſciples; and Saul, who was diſtinguiſhed by his zeal for the laws of Moſes againſt thoſe whom he thought to infringe upon them, was the moſt active inſtrument of their violence, entering into private houſes, and apprehending perſons of all conditions; and without regard to the diſtinction of ſex, committed them promiſcuouſly to priſon. In conſequence of this perſecution, many chriſtians were diſperſed into diſtant places, and by this means the knowledge of the goſpel was extended farther than it would otherwiſe have been in the ſame time. But notwithſtanding this danger, all the apoſtles choſe to remain at Jeruſalem; and their enemies perhaps thought that, as they had been delivered in a miraculous manner before, it would be in vain to attempt doing any thing againſt *them*.

Among other perſons who were driven from Jeruſalem by this perſecution, Philip (whoſe name appears next to that of Stephen in the liſt of the ſeven deacons, or ſtewards) went and preached in Samaria, where the Jews

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had no power ; and as his preaching was accompanied with the working of miracles, eſpecially in the cure of perſons afflicted with the palſy, ſome who were incurably lame, and ſome demoniacs, he made many converts; and there was a general joy in their chief city. Here he met with a man whoſe name is often mentioned by the early chriſtian writers, viz. Simon, to which is commonly added the epithet of *Magus*, on account of the magical arts to which he pretended. He was in reality a philoſopher of what is uſually called the *oriental ſect*, the leading principle of which was, that from the ſupreme mind there ſprung, by way of emanation, various intelligences, and from theſe others of the ſame nature, but leſs perfect. The moſt exalted of theſe derived beings were ſuppoſed capable of the higheſt offices, even that of making worlds. It was alſo thought that they occaſionally deſcended from the empyreal regions, which they uſually occupied, and for great and good purpoſes animated the bodies of men, and other creatures, in the ſame manner as dæmons were ſuppoſed to take poſſeſſion of men for bad purpoſes. The people of Samaria entertained a notion (encouraged, no doubt, by Simon himſelf) that he was one of thoſe ſu-

perior intelligences; for, it is ſaid, that they thought him to be *the great power of God*, and he kept up this high opinion of himſelf by various tricks and impoſitions, probably ſuch as the Egyptian prieſts and magicians were famous for. Simon, however, ſeeing the miracles of Philip to be greatly ſuperior to any thing that he could pretend to, became a convert to his doctrine, and was baptized.

The chriſtians at Jeruſalem hearing of the many converts made at Samaria by the preaching of Philip, ſent to them the apoſtles Peter and John, that by their prayers, and the laying on of their hands, thoſe who had been baptized might receive the holy ſpirit, or be endued with the gift of ſpeaking in languages which they had not learned; the conferring of this power being a privilege which it pleaſed divine providence to reſerve for the apoſtles. Accordingly, by means of theſe apoſtles, the Samaritan converts did receive the holy ſpirit; and this appearing to Simon, as it naturally would, a thing of a more wonderful nature than any thing that he had ſeen before, obſerving alſo that it was peculiar to the apoſtles to impart this power, and thinking that they could beſtow it upon others, he offered them a ſum of money to ſhare it with

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them. To this propoſal Peter, with great indignation, replied, "Thy money periſh "with thee, becauſe thou haſt thought that "the gift of God might be purchaſed with "money." He moreover added, that he knew nothing of the profeſſion that he had taken upon himſelf, and exhorted him to repent of his bad diſpoſition and unworthy purpoſe. On this Simon ſeemed to be affected with a juſt remorſe, and intreated the apoſtle to pray for him, that the doom which he had announced might not be inflicted upon him.

It is probable, however, that this Simon afterwards deſerted the profeſſion of chriſtianity, and endeavoured to draw followers to himſelf, as before. For, according to the chriſtian tradition, he every where oppoſed the ſpread of the goſpel, and even held public diſputations with Peter on the ſubject. But ſeveral of his diſciples held the principles of his philoſophy together with the profeſſion of chriſtianity, and were diſtinguiſhed by the appellation of *Gnoſtics*, from the boaſts which they made of their ſuperior knowledge. From theſe perſons the apoſtles, as we ſhall ſee, met with great oppoſition; and many of them formed ſocieties of their own, in conſequence of which they had the appellation of *heretics*,

or *ſeparatiſts*. Being again divided and ſub-divided among themſelves, they formed a great variety of ſects, of which an account will be given in its proper place.

After this, Peter and John, having preached in ſeveral villages of the Samaritans, returned to Jeruſalem; but, Philip, who remained there, had a divine impulſe to go to the ſouth, into the deſert through which lay the road from Jeruſalem to Gaza. There he met with an eunuch, an officer of great authority under Candace, queen of Æthiopia, who being a Jew, or a proſelyte, had been attending one of the public feſtivals at Jeruſalem, and was then ſitting in his chariot, and reading in the prophecy of Iſaiah. Philip being ordered by the ſpirit of God to place himſelf in the way of the chariot, heard him reading, and took the liberty to aſk him if he underſtood what he had read; and the eunuch, frankly acknowledging his want of an interpreter, deſired Philip to go up into the chariot, and ſit with him; which he readily did. The paſſage he had been reading was in the 53d chapter of Iſaiah, where the prophet deſcribes a perſon who was led as a *ſheep to the ſlaughter*, and who, like *a lamb dumb before his ſhearers, opened not his mouth*. This character Philip

lip applied to Jeſus, and from this he took occaſion to explain to him the doctrine of the divine miſſion, the death, and reſurrection of Chriſt; adding, no doubt, that perſons were initiated into his religion by baptiſm.

Afterwards, coming to a place where there was water, the eunuch expreſſed a deſire of being baptized, to which Philip replied, that there could be no objection to it, if he was a believer in what he had informed him of. On this the eunuch declared his belief that Jeſus was the ſon of God, or the Meſſiah, which expreſſed all that was eſſential to a chriſtian, and therefore, both of them alighting from the chariot, Philip baptized him. The eunuch was farther confirmed in his faith by a miracle of an extraordinary nature. For after his baptiſm Philip was taken from him by the ſpirit, or power of God, ſo that he diſappeared from his ſight; on which he purſued his journey with peculiar joy and ſatisfaction of mind. Philip found himſelf at Azotus, and preaching the goſpel at that place, and all along the ſea-coaſt, he came at length to Cæſarea. Acts viii.

SECTION III.

From the Converſion of Paul to the preaching of the Goſpel to the Gentiles.

FROM the death of Stephen (probably A. D. 33) to the acceſſion of Caligula to the Roman empire, A. D. 37, the rulers of the Jews carried on an active and unrelenting perſecution of the chriſtians, in which to A. D. 35, Saul was their chief inſtrument; but then a ſtop was put to his furious career by a moſt extraordinary interpoſition of divine providence. Of his own accord, Saul had applied to the high prieſt for orders to go to Damaſcus in ſearch of chriſtians, that he might bring them from that city bound to Jeruſalem. For the ſeverity of this perſecution had driven chriſtian preachers (and at that time every chriſtian might be ſaid to be a preacher) to this city, and others ſtill more diſtant from Judea, where, their zeal not abating, but being rather increaſed, they endeavoured to make as many proſelytes as they could; and the report of thoſe in Damaſcus brought Saul thither.

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As Saul drew near the city, his rage, no doubt, increaſing with the near proſpect of his prey, he found himſelf ſurrounded by an extrordinary light from heaven, and falling to the ground, he heard a voice pronouncing theſe words, *Saul, Saul, why perſecuteſt thou me;* to which, when he replied, *Who art thou, Lord* (which ſhews that he was not diveſted of all preſence of mind) he received for anſwer, *I am Jeſus whom thou perſecuteſt. It is hard for thee to kick againſt the goad;* repreſenting, by this familiar proverb, the impoſſibility of ſucceeding in his enterprize to extirpate chriſtianity. Aſtoniſhed at this reply, and finding the fatal miſtake he had been under, he ſaid, *Lord, what wilt thou have me to do;* to which he had this anſwer, *Ariſe, go into the city, and it ſhall be told thee what thou ſhalt do.* With this the viſion ended. The companions of Saul had all this time been preſent, and were, no doubt, greatly amazed, hearing the ſound of a voice, though (perhaps not being near enough) not diſtinguiſhing the words that were pronounced, and ſeeing no perſon from whom they could proceed. Saul, being riſen from the ground, and finding himſelf unable to ſee, was con-

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ducted into the city, where he paſſed three days and nights without eating or drinking, as well as without ſight.

In this interval of darkneſs and faſting, his mind would be ſufficiently tranquilized, and his devotion (of the principle of which he was never diveſted) would be peculiarly ardent; and being then well aſſured of the reſurrection of Jeſus, by whom he had been accoſted, and conſequently of the truth of chriſtianity, he prayed for farther inſtruction, (agreeably to the promiſe that had been made him) and no doubt alſo for the reſtoration of his ſight. At this time Jeſus alſo appeared to a diſciple in Damaſcus, of the name of Ananias, and directing him to the place where Paul was, informed him that *he* alſo had been favoured with a viſion, in which he was told that a perſon of the name of Ananias would viſit him, and reſtore him to his ſight. On this Ananias, without refuſing to obey, expreſſed his ſurprize at the commiſſion, conſidering how great a perſecutor of the chriſtians Saul had been, and with what views he was then come to Damaſcus. But Jeſus replied, *He is a choſen veſſel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, as well as the*

the children of Iſrael; adding that he ſhould farther appear to him, and apprize him of all that he ſhould ſuffer in his cauſe.

On this, without farther heſitation, Ananias went to the houſe where Saul was, and accoſting him with the appellation of *brother*, put his hands upon him, and ſaid, *the Lord, even Jeſus, who appeared to thee in the way, has ſent me that thou mighteſt receive thy ſight, and be filled with the holy Spirit.* With this ſomething like ſcales fell from his eyes, by which he recovered his ſight. He was then baptiſed, and continued ſome time with his fellow chriſtians at Damaſcus; his former companions having probably ſoon left him, confounded at what they had ſeen, and probably without underſtanding much of the matter.

The ſame zeal which had prompted Saul to perſecute the chriſtians now led him to be as warm an advocate for their cauſe. Accordingly, he ſoon began to preach in the ſynagogues of Damaſcus, maintaining that Jeſus was the Meſſiah; at which all who heard him were aſtoniſhed, knowing his preceding character and conduct. But he perſiſted in his preaching, and by his arguments he confounded the bigoted Jews of that place, who would not fail to be highly provoked at the deſertion

deſertion of their former champion. They were ſo much enraged, that they formed a deſign to take away his life, and lay in wait at the gates of the city day and night for that purpoſe. But his friends, being appriſed of it, contrived to let him down from the wall of the city in a baſket, ſo that he eſcaped their purſuit.

Saul having thus eſcaped from the hands of his enemies, preached in the neighbouring country of Arabia a great part of three years, after which he returned to Damaſcus, and then went to Jeruſalem. There the diſciples were, very naturally, afraid of him, doubting the reality of his converſion; till Barnabas, who (being of Cyprus, an iſland not far from Tarſus the native place of Saul) had probably ſome previous knowledge of him, and had by himſelf been acquainted with the more recent events of his life, had anſwered for the truth of his extraordinary narrative. By him he was introduced to the apoſtles Peter and James, and with them he continued fifteen days. At Jeruſalem Saul preached with the ſame aſſiduity and boldneſs as he had done at Damaſcus, diſputing particularly with thoſe who, like himſelf, came from thoſe countries in which the Greek language was ſpoken. But they being greatly exaſperated againſt

him, as the Jews of Damaſcus had been, endeavoured alſo to take his life; and here likewiſe his friends, being apprized of their intention, interpoſed and conducted him to Cæſarea, and thence he went to Tarſus. Acts ix. 21.

Saul had begun, and continued, to preach theſe three years without any communication with the apoſtles; and when they converſed with him they found that he was as well acquainted with the chriſtian doctrine as themſelves. Jeſus, who had appeared to him before his arrival at Damaſcus, and likewiſe in that town before he recovered his ſight, had probably, ſome time afterwards, appeared to him again, and for a longer time; to give him more ſatisfaction concerning the reality of his reſurrection, and alſo to give him particular inſtructions concerning every thing that he was to teach in his name. By this he was qualified to be an apoſtle, as well as thoſe who had been appointed to that high office before the death of Jeſus; and his commiſſion relating chiefly to the Gentiles, he obtained the peculiar title of the *apoſtle of the Gentiles*, in which character we ſhall ſoon find that he greatly diſtinguiſhed himſelf, having carried the knowledge of the goſpel farther

farther than any other apoſtle, and having founded more churches in diſtant countries than perhaps all the other apoſtles beſides.

About this time, viz. A. D. 37, the emperor Tiberius, in whoſe reign Chriſt had been crucified, died, and was ſucceeded by Caligula, a mad and brutal tyrant, who, among other extravagencies, took into his head to be worſhipped as a god, by all the people in the empire. The Gentile nations having been accuſtomed to worſhip dead men, and the emperors J. Cæſar and Auguſtus having had divine honours decreed to them preſently after their deaths, this worſhip of a living man would not to them appear ſo extraordinary a thing; though they might think this particular emperor, notwithſtanding his power, unworthy of ſo great an honour; but to the Jews, the great object of whoſe religion it was to worſhip no other than the one true God, the maker of heaven and earth, the difficulty was of a moſt ſerious nature; and when Petronius governor of Syria (to which the government of Judea was ſubordinate) announced the orders he had received from Rome, and informed them that a ſtatue of the emperor muſt abſolutely be

ſet up in the temple; and when they ſaw him at Tiberias at the head of an army ſufficient to enforce the order, many thouſands of the Jews came, without arms, to entreat that he would not prophane their temple, expreſſing their willingneſs to die rather than ſee the order executed. They even ſuſpended the labours of agriculture, though it was then ſeed time, to ſhew how indifferent they were about what might become of themſelves, or their country, while a thing of ſuch infinitely more moment was depending. The governor, moved by their ſubmiſſive behaviour, ſuſpended the execution of the order he had received, till he had given the emperor more particular information concerning his peculiar circumſtances with reſpect to it; and by means of king Agrippa (who had been ſent to Rome to complain of the cruelties of Pilate, and who had cultivated the friendſhip of Caligula) he was for the preſent diverted from his purpoſe; though it is probable that nothing but his death would have given the Jews any effectual relief in this caſe*.

By Caligula this Agrippa (who was the grandſon of Herod the Great, by Ariſtobulus) was made king of the Tetrarchy of his

* Joſephus's Wars of the Jews. B. 2. C. 8. 9.

uncle

uncle Phillip, who had died ſome time before without heirs, and his province of Trachonitis had been annexed to that of Syria. Herodias, the profligate and ambitious wife of Herod the tetrarch of Galilee, who had procured the death of John the baptiſt, ſtung with envy to ſee the nephew of her huſband honoured with the title of *king*, while he remained a ſimple *tetrarch*, could not reſt till ſhe had prevailed upon him to go to Rome to ſolicit the ſame title for himſelf. She accompanied him, but before their arrival the king had ſent letters to Rome, accuſing him of having conſpired with the Parthians againſt the empire; in conſequence of which, Caligula baniſhed both Herod and his wife to Lyons in Gaul, and gave his tetrarchy to Agrippa. In the reign of this emperor Pilate did not eſcape the proſecution of the Jews, as he had done under Tiberius, but was baniſhed to Vienne in Gaul, where, according to Euſebius, he, in deſpair, laid violent hands upon himſelf*.

It was probably owing to the apprehenſion which the Jews were under concerning the orders of Caligula, that, being wholly occupied about their own ſafety, they ſuſpended

* Hiſt. L. ii. C. vii. p. 55.

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the perſecution of the chriſtians, in conſequence of which the church enjoyed that *reſt throughout all Judea, Galilee, and Samaria,* which is mentioned, Acts ix. 31. and which was attended with a great increaſe of the diſciples. During this interval, Peter, being under no reſtraint to go wherever he pleaſed, viſited the diſciples at Lydda, where he reſtored to health a perſon of the name of Eneas, who was paralytic, and had kept his bed eight years. He then went to Joppa, where he raiſed to life a chriſtian woman of excellent character, and diſtingiſhed for her charity to the poor, and other virtues, of the name of Tabitha (in Greek Dorcas) In this place Peter continued ſome time, reſiding with one Simon a tanner. Acts ix. 43.

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SECTION IV.

From the preaching of the Goſpel to the Gentiles to the Council of the Apoſtles at Jeruſalem.

IN all the preceding period, compriſing the ſpace of ten years after the death of Chriſt, the apoſtles had confined the preaching of the goſpel to the Jews, and they ſeem to have had no idea of extending it to the Gentiles, unleſs they ſhould firſt have become proſelytes to Judaiſm, ſo as to be circumciſed, and conform to all the law of Moſes. But a ſufficient harveſt, as we may ſay, of the Jews being now gathered in, it pleaſed the divine Being to begin the greater harveſt of the gentile world; and Peter, who had been the firſt preacher of the goſpel to the former, had alſo the honour of being firſt employed to preach to the latter.

Many of the Heathens reſiding in or near Judea, were at that time ſo much impreſſed with the ſuperiority of the Jewiſh religion over that in which they had been educated, that though they did not chuſe to become proper proſelytes, they were convinced of the abſurdity of idolatry, and in private worſhipped only the

true

true God of the Jews, and many of theſe perſons were remarkable for their devotion and benevolence. A perſon of this character, viz. Cornelius, a Roman centurion reſiding at Cæſarea (the uſual abode of the governors of the province) one who is deſcribed*, as *fearing God with all his houſe, who gave alms to the people, and prayed to God always* (by which is probably meant at all the uſual hours at which the Jews offered their devotions) was praying at the ninth hour (three in the afternoon with us) which was the time of evening ſacrifice in the temple; when an angel appeared to him, informing him that his prayers and alms were accepted of God, and ordering him to ſend to Joppa for Peter, who would give him farther information. As the ſupernatural appearance to Paul was at midday, ſo this to Cornelius was not in the night, but at a time which can afford no ſuſpicion of a man's being ſubject to any illuſion. On this he ſent two of his houſehold ſervants, and alſo a devout ſoldier who attended upon his perſon, after he had given them an account of the important errand on which they were to go.

Before their arrival, Peter being at prayer on the houſe top at noon, became very hungry;

* Acts x. 2.

gry; and while dinner was preparing for him, he had a trance, in which he ſaw a large ſheet let down from heaven by its four corners, and in it all kinds of animals, clean and unclean, and he heard a voice ſaying to him, *riſe Peter kill and eat.* To this he replied, that he had never eaten any thing which according to the law of Moſes was unclean: but to this he received for anſwer, *What God has cleanſed call not thou unclean.* This viſion, with all its circumſtances, was repeated three times, and then the ſheet ſeemed to be drawn up into heaven.

When Peter was recovered from his trance, and was conſidering with himſelf what it could mean, the three men diſpatched by Cornelius knocked at the gate of the houſe, and the ſpirit of God informed him that they were enquiring for him, and bade him go along with them, for that he had ſent them. The men, being introduced to Peter, delivered their meſſage; and the next day Peter, accompanied by ſome diſciples from Joppa, ſet out with them, and the day following being arrived at Cæſarea, they found Cornelius with many of his friends waiting for him.

On entering the room, Peter told them, that though it was not held lawful for a Jew

to aſſociate with Gentiles, he had been directed by God to conſider no man as unclean, or unfit for his ſociety; and therefore had come without heſitation when he was ſent for. In return, Cornelius, in a diſtinct account of his viſion, gave the reaſons why he had ſent for him; and Peter, not doubting but he was to give this company an account of the goſpel, of which he was an apoſtle, recited to them the heads of the doctrine, the miracles, and eſpecially the reſurrection of Jeſus, of which he ſaid that himſelf and many others were witneſſes; and as theſe Gentiles were not unacquainted with the Jewiſh religion, he moreover informed them that Chriſt was appointed to be the final judge of the world, and that the ancient prophets bore witneſs to him.

While Peter was giving this accouut of the chriſtian doctrine (to which Cornelius and his friends, no doubt, gave the firmeſt aſſent, eſpecially as Peter appealed to their own knowledge for the truth of many of the facts) the ſpirit of God fell upon them, as it had done upon the Jewiſh diſciples at the firſt, and they began to ſpeak the praiſes of God in unknown tongues. This appearance greatly ſurpriſed Peter and his friends; and ſeeing that

God had already evidently given them the ſeal of true diſciples, Peter obſerved that there could be no impropriety in baptizing them. This being performed at their requeſt, Peter and his companions continued ſome days longer with them.

Peter had, no doubt, expected that Cornelius and his friends were to have become proſelytes to Judaiſm before they could be baptized, and received into the body of chriſtians; and the diſciples at Jeruſalem, having the ſame idea, and not having been informed of all the particulars which had led to the baptizing of Cornelius, but only that Peter had baptized perſons who were uncircumciſed, were much diſpleaſed with him for it. To ſatisfy them, Peter, when he was returned to Jeruſalem (which he probably had done to give the chriſtians there an account of ſo extraordinary an event) related diſtinctly all that he had ſeen or done with relation to it; after which, as they could not but own that the hand of God was in it, they rejoiced, notwithſtanding their former prejudices, that God had opened a door for the admiſſion of Gentiles into the chriſtian church. Still, however, we ſhall find that many of the more zealous Jewiſh chriſtians were never thoroughly

roughly reconciled to the Gentile chriſtians, ſo far were they from believing the infallibility of an apoſtle as ſuch*.

At this time the number of the diſciples was much increaſed in the neighbourhood of Antioch, by the preaching of many perſons who had been driven from Jeruſalem by the perſecution in which Stephen had been put to death; and the church at Jeruſalem, hearing of this, ſent Barnabas to Antioch; and he, being full of zeal, greatly encouraged them to perſevere in the profeſſion of the goſpel. Having ſtrengthened the diſciples in that city, and added to the number of them, he went to ſeek Saul, who was at that time in his native city, Tarſus, in the neighbourhood of which he had been preaching; and having brought him to Antioch, they continued preaching there a whole year, and made many converts. Theſe, bearing at that time a ſenſible proportion to the other inhabitants of the place, came now to be diſtinguiſhed by the peculiar name of *chriſtians*, an appellation, which, though probably given by their enemies, was chearfully received by all the diſciples of Chriſt.

At this time there came from Jeruſalem to Antioch ſome chriſtians who had the gift of

* Acts xi. 22.

prophecy, and eſpecially one Agabus, who was inſpired to foretel a great famine through all the Roman empire, which happened in the reign of Claudius; and the diſciples, on the apprehenſion of it, determined to ſend relief to their brethren in Judea. Accordingly, a collection being made for that benevolent purpoſe, it was ſent to the elders of the church by Barnabas and Saul*. In this famine Helena, queen of Adiabene in Syria, bought corn at a great expence in Egypt, and diſtributed it to the Jews at Jeruſalem †.

It is ſomething remarkable that, notwithſtanding the admiſſion of Cornelius and his friends into the number of diſciples by baptiſm, and the approbation of Peter's conduct in this buſineſs by the church at Jeruſalem, neither Peter himſelf, nor any other chriſtians, appear to have endeavoured to make any other converts among the Gentiles. Perhaps they waited for ſome more expreſs authority for it. In the mean time, however, it ſeems that Paul (which was the name that Saul afterwards bore, and which I ſhall from this time give him) had preached to Gentiles in the neighbourhood of Tarſus and Antioch; and

* Acts xi. 30. † Euſeb. Hiſt. L. 3. C. 13. p. 60.

for

for this he had perhaps received from Chriſt in perſon, an expreſs commiſſion, either while he was preaching in Arabia, or on this particular occaſion. Or, as it had been intimated to him at his baptiſm, that he was to be ſent to the Gentiles, on hearing that Peter had baptized Cornelius, he might think himſelf ſufficiently authorized, without receiving any particular commiſſion for the purpoſe, to do what Peter (perhaps for fear of offending the Jews) had foreborne. What Paul had then done in this way, being in a country remote from Jeruſalem, was not generally known there. But being ſent thither upon this occaſion, together with Barnabas, he informed the apoſtles, in confidence, of what he had done with reſpect to preaching the goſpel to Gentiles*; but he ſaid nothing of it to the church at large.

Among other converts from the Gentiles was Titus, whom Paul took with him to Jeruſalem, and, as he was not a Jew, he did not circumciſe him; to which, as it ſhould ſeem from Paul's account of this tranſaction, he had been adviſed; but he had peremptorily refuſed, leſt it ſhould be a precedent to enſlave all future Gentile converts, by compelling them to obſerve the laws of Moſes†. As to the chief

* Gal. ii. 2. † Gal. ii. 4.

of the apoſtles, Peter, James, and John, when they heard the account that Paul gave, perceiving that he had a ſpecial commiſſion to preach to the gentiles, as Peter and the reſt had to the Jews, they gave him and Barnabas the right hand of fellowſhip, wiſhing them the greateſt ſucceſs in their miſſion, only admoniſhing them to be mindful of the poor diſciples at Jeruſalem, and procure ſome contributions for them, which Paul himſelf had much at heart*.

On the death of Caligula, A. D. 41, his uncle Claudius was made emperor; and as the ſenate had been induced to proclaim him by the addreſs of Agrippa, who was then at Rome, among other marks of his gratitude, he not only confirmed him in the kingdom which had been given him by Caligula, but added to his territories Samaria and Judea, which had belonged to his grandfather. He alſo gave the kingdom of Chalcis in Syria to his brother Herod; and to oblige him the more, the emperor made ſeveral decrees in favour of the Jews, allowing them the ſame privileges which they had enjoyed through all the empire in the reign of Auguſtus.

Agrippa, who is alſo called Herod, on his arrival in Judea, did many things to ingratiate

* Gal. ii. 10.

himſelf

himſelf with his ſubjects; and to pleaſe them the more, he began a perſecution againſt the chriſtians, in which he beheaded James the brother of John, and the ſon of Zebedee, who was the firſt of the apoſtles that ſuffered martyrdom. He alſo cauſed Peter to be apprehended, and committed him to the cuſtody of two ſoldiers, one of them being chained to each of his hands, intending to have him executed after the paſſover; but it pleaſed God to deliver him from this danger, in the ſame manner in which he had been reſcued on a former occaſion. For in the night preceding the day on which he was to have been executed, an angel, attended with a great light, appeared in the priſon, and Peter being aſleep, he awakened him, and bade him riſe and follow him; the chains at the ſame time falling from his hands. As they went, the gates of the priſon opened to them of their own accord; and the angel leaving him, Peter found himſelf in the ſtreet alone. Then, but not before, Peter was ſatisfied that what had paſſed was no viſion, but a reality. Going to the houſe of Mary, the mother of Mark the evangeliſt, he was received with great joy; and when he had told his friends in what manner he had been delivered from his im-

minent

minent danger, he left the city. Herod diſappointed in his views, ordered the ſoldiers who had been placed to guard Peter, to be put to death.

Afterwards, viz. A. D. 43, the ſame Herod Agrippa being at Cæſarea, a ſpeech which he made there to ſome ambaſſadors from Tyre and Sidon was received with loud acclamations, and ſaid to be the ſpeech of a God, and not of a man. This fulſome adulation he had the vanity and impiety to receive; but he was preſently ſeized with a mortal diſeaſe ſimilar to that of which his grandfather had died. For his body was in ſuch a ſtate that worms bred in it *.

This Arippa left a ſon ſeventeen years of age, who ſucceeded his father; but being thought too young for the adminiſtration, it was given to Cuſpius Fadus. After the death of his uncle Herod king of Chalcis, Claudius gave Agrippa that kingdom. But in the thirteenth year of his reign he took it from him, and gave him, inſtead of it, thoſe provinces which had formed the tetrarchy of Philip, viz. Batanea, Trachonitis, and Abilene. Afterwards Nero gave him part of Galilee, including Tiberias, and Julias beyond Jordan.

* Acts xii. 23.

This

This perſecutor of the chriſtians being removed, more converts were made, and Paul and Barnabas, having diſcharged their commiſſion, returned to Antioch, taking with them Mark the evangeliſt. It was probably during this journey which Paul made to Jeruſalem, fourteen years before he wrote the ſecond Epiſtle to the Corinthians, that, being in the temple, he had a trance, in which he imagined that he was caught up to heaven; but what he heard there he ſays *, it was not lawful for him to declare. And leſt he ſhould be exalted above meaſure, by ſo diſtinguiſhing an honour, he had from that time ſome affliction, which he calls *a meſſenger of ſatan*, from which he earneſtly prayed to be relieved; but he only received for anſwer, that the power of God would be ſufficient for him. What this affliction was he does not ſpecify, but it was probably ſomething that he apprehended would render his miniſtry leſs acceptable; and it is commonly thought to have been either an impediment in his ſpeech, or ſomething that rendered his perſonal appearance unpleaſing. During this viſion, in which Chriſt appeared to him, he was ordered to make haſte, and leave Jeruſalem, becauſe the Jews of that

* 2 Cor. xii. 4.

place

place would not receive his word, and he was told that he would be ſent to a great diſtance, among the Gentiles*.

This intimation of Jeſus to Paul was ſoon verified. For in the year following, viz. A.D. 45, during the public worſhip at Antioch, it was intimated to one of the company who had the ſpirit of prophecy, that Barnabas and Paul ſhould be ſet apart for ſome ſpecial commiſſion. Accordingly, being recommended to the bleſſing of God, by faſting and prayer, they departed, and in the firſt place went to Cyprus, the native place of Barnabas. The Roman governor of the iſland at that time was Sergius Paulus, a man of prudence and moderation, who hearing of theſe two miſſionaries expreſſed a deſire to converſe with them; but one Elymas, a Jew, who, like Simon Magus, practiſed magical arts, endeavoured to give the governor bad impreſſions of chriſtianity; when Paul, moved no doubt by the ſpirit of God, after addreſſing him with great ſeverity, told him that he would become blind for a ſeaſon. This awful denunciation being immediately fulfilled, the governor was greatly ſtruck with it, and declared himſelf a Chriſtian†.

* Acts xxiii. 17—21.

† Acts xiii. 12.

Leaving

Leaving Cyprus, Paul and Barnabas went to Perga in Pamphilia, and there Mark, diſcouraged, as Paul thought, with the proſpect of the difficulties which were before them, declined to accompany them any farther, and returned to Jeruſalem. But they proceeded without him, and went to Antioch in Piſidia, where they began to preach in the Jewiſh ſynagogue. There Paul recited to his countrymen the promiſes of God to their fathers concerning the Meſſiah, ſhewing that thoſe prophecies had been fulfilled in Jeſus, who had been crucified, but whom God had raiſed from the dead. In conſequence of this, many of the religious Jews and proſelytes became converts, and ſome Gentiles who were preſent expreſſing a wiſh to hear them again the next ſabbath, almoſt the whole city crouded to them. This circumſtance gave great offence to the zealous Jews, and by their intereſt with the leading men of the place, Paul and Barnabas were expelled from that country. Many converts, however, were made, eſpecially among the Gentiles, and by them others were converted in the neighbouring places*.

* Acts xiii. 52.

Leaving

Leaving Antioch, they went to Iconium, and here alſo they had many converts both of Jews and Greeks, and many miracles were wrought by them there. But the party of of the unbelieving Jews prevailing, they were driven from that place, as they had been from Antioch, and fled to Lyſtra and Derbe, cities of Lycaonia.

The hiſtory of their preaching at Lyſtra is particularly remarkable. At the gates of the city there ſat a man who had been lame from his birth, like him whom Peter had cured at the gate of the temple. Him Paul reſtored to the perfect uſe of his limbs; and the people, ſtruck with the prodigy, immediately conceived that they muſt be two of their gods, who had viſited the world in the form of men, taking Barnabas to be Jupiter, and Paul Mercury; and with this idea they brought oxen with garlands, and were preparing to offer ſacrifice to them, ſo that it was with difficulty that Paul, by an excellent ſpeech, in which he told them that they were only men like themſelves, who had come to turn them from their idol worſhip to that God who made them and all things, diverted them from their purpoſe. Notwithſtanding this extra-

ordinary

ordinary miracle, ſome zealous Jews from Antioch and Iconium, where Paul and Barnabas had been preaching before, arriving there, they induced the people to drive them from the place, and even to ſtone Paul, ſo that he was taken up for dead. They had probably been perſuaded to think that they were dangerous people, poſſeſſed of the arts of magic, by which, though they might do ſome good, they would probably do more miſchief*.

From this place they went to Derbe, and having preached, and made many diſciples, in that city, they proceeded no farther at this time, but returned by way of Lyſtra, Iconium, and Antioch in Piſidia, confirming the diſciples they had made, and exhorting them not to be diſcouraged at the afflictions they might be called to endure, ſince they would have an abundant recompence in the kingdom of heaven. They alſo appointed elders in every church, and recommending them by prayer to the divine bleſſing, they made a progreſs through Piſidia, Pamphilia, Perga, to Attalia, from which laſt place they went by ſea to Antioch in Syria, from which they had ſet out, where they gave the church an

* Acts xiv.

account of the ſucceſs of their miniſtry; and here they continued ſome time.

In this place I muſt be indulged in making a few reflections. In preaching to the Jews, the great object of the apoſtles was to convince them, from their own ſcriptures, that Jeſus was the Meſſiah. With reſpect to the proper fundamental doctrines of religion, ſuch as the unity of God, his placability to returning ſinners, and the reſurrection of the dead, they had nothing to add to their knowledge, except that, the evidence of this laſt mentioned doctrine having been loſt, it was now abundantly confirmed by the death and reſurrection of Chriſt, who alſo taught that the dead would be raiſed at his ſecond glorious coming; that after the riſing of the dead a change would take place in the living, that they would then be incorruptible, and continue to exiſt without any farther propagation of the ſpecies. With reſpect to the wicked we are taught to believe that they will riſe again as well as the virtuous; but whether it will be to an immortal life, we are not ſo explicitly informed.

The Gentiles had much more to learn of the apoſtles. They were to be brought off from their idolatrous faſcinating rites, their licen-

tious feſtivals, and a thouſand abſurd and debaſing ſuperſtitions, to the belief of one God, infinitely powerful, wiſe, and good, the maker and preſerver of all things. They had to learn the maxims of his moral government, as alſo much of their duty in this life, as well as every thing concerning their expectations in another. To hear ſuch doctrines as the apoſtles could teach them on theſe moſt important ſubjects, confirmed by the deciſive authority of miracles, muſt have ſtruck the more conſiderate and well diſpoſed among them in a manner of which, we who have been brought up in the belief of chriſtianity, can hardly form an idea. To them the goſpel would be indeed, what its name imports, viz. *good news*.

Heathens converted to chriſtianity would ſee themſelves, and every thing around them, in a new and infinitely more important light, as under the moral government of God, and candidates for a happy immortality. With this perſuaſion, they would not value this life, or any thing that they could loſe or ſuffer in it, whenever it ſhould come into competition with their intereſt in another. Accordingly, we ſhall find, in the ſequel of this hiſtory, that many, who had been accuſtomed

to the elegancies and luxuries of life, eagerly ran to martyrdom, even though torture generally preceded death. It is no wonder that the magiſtrates, and other perſons in the higher ranks of life, who gave little attention to the preaching of the goſpel, and who would not give themſelves the trouble even to look into any thing written by chriſtians, were aſtoniſhed at this novelty, and conſidered the chriſtian converts as ſeized with madneſs. But ſo general an effect, upon the more ſober and virtuous part of the community, in all countries, the beſt ſubjects of the empire in all other reſpects, was a circumſtance deſerving of more attention than they were diſpoſed to give to it.

On the other hand, it is no great wonder that, attached as many were to their ancient religion and rites, in which they had been educated, and which had been practiced from time immemorial; imagining, as they did, that the welfare of the ſtate depended upon the obſervance of them, ignorant as they were of the nature and evidences of chriſtianity, uninquiſitive about it, and liſtening to every idle and malicious ſlander againſt thoſe who made profeſſion of the new religion, ſo many per-

ſons

ſons in the higher ranks of life, and even men of letters, and philoſophers, as well as of the loweſt rabble, who will liſten to nothing rational or ſerious, ſtill continued bigotted heathens.

SECTION V.

From the Council of the Apoſtles to Paul's third apoſtolical Journey.

WHILE Paul and Barnabas were at Antioch, Peter arrived at that city from Jeruſalem; and finding many Gentile converts, he did not ſcruple to converſe and communicate with them. But other chriſtians, pretending to have the authority of James (who ſeems to have had the chief influence at Jeruſalem) inſiſted on the new converts being circumciſed, and becoming in all reſpects proſelytes to Judaiſm; and Peter, rather than diſpleaſe theſe perſons, abſtained from communicating with the Gentile converts, and aſſociated with the Jews only. This conduct in Peter gave juſt alarm

and offence to Paul, who had been chiefly inſtrumental in ſpreading the goſpel among the Gentiles, and who, on that account, was naturally more zealous for their liberty. He therefore freely and publicly expoſtulated with Peter on the impropriety and inconſiſtency of his conduct, and this excellent man did not perſiſt in what he was convinced was wrong *.

The more zealous Jewiſh chriſtians, however, unmoved by the remonſtrances of Paul, or the acquieſcence of Peter, ſtill maintained that there was no ſalvation out of the Moſaic inſtitutions, and inſiſted upon the Gentile converts conforming in all reſpects to them; and the church being much diſturbed by this contention, they agreed to ſend Barnabas and Paul, who had been their meſſengers on a former occaſion, to conſult the whole body of the apoſtles and elders at Jeruſalem. Theſe two miſſionaries gave an account of all that that God had done by their means in Gentile countries to the chriſtian ſocieties, in their journey through Phenice and Samaria, and by them the news was heard with great joy. But when they came to Jeruſalem, they were not able to give the ſame ſatisfaction to their brethren there †.

* Gal. ii. 11.

† Acts xv. 3.

However,

However, on a day appointed to conſider of the matter, after much contention, Peter ſtood up, and reminded them how God had ſome time before given his ſanction to the admiſſion of believing Gentiles into the chriſtian church, by imparting to them the gifts of the ſpirit as he had done to themſelves; and ſaid that it was unreaſonable to impoſe upon the Gentiles ſo heavy a yoke, as the obſervance of the laws of Moſes muſt be to them, when it would make no difference with reſpect to their final ſalvation.

This was followed by Paul and Barnabas giving a diſtinct account of the effect of their preaching to the Gentiles, and of the miracles with which it had been attended. On this James recollected ſeveral paſſages of the ancient prophets, which he thought, implied that the Gentiles were to be admitted into the future kingdom of the Meſſiah, and gave it as his opinion, that the new converts ſhould not be troubled with the obſervance of the whole law, but that it ſhould be recommended to them to abſtain from idols (meaning probably from partaking of the feaſts in ſacrificing to idols) from fornication (to which the religion of the heathens gave too much countenance, and of the criminality of which the

heathens in general made very light) from things ſtrangled, and from blood.

In this opinion the whole aſſembly acquieſced, and accordingly an epiſtle was drawn up, addreſſed to the Gentile Chriſtians in Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia, by whom Paul and Barnabas had been ſent, to that purpoſe; aſſuring them that, notwithſtanding what ſome had ſaid, they had no authority from them to inſiſt upon their being circumciſed, or obſerving the laws of Moſes. Along with this letter, and the bearers of it Paul and Barnabas, they ſent Judas and Silas, who were probably elders at Jeruſalem, to give them a farther account; and when it was delivered at Antioch, it gave the greateſt ſatisfaction to the whole aſſembly. Judas and Silas continued in that city ſome time, encouraging the brethren; and when Judas returned to Jeruſalem, Silas choſe to remain at Antioch*.

This ſolemn aſſembly, or council, of the apoſtles was probably held A. D. 49, and the year following, Paul and Barnabas reſolved upon a ſecond progreſs through thoſe parts of Aſia Minor, which they had viſited in their former journey. But when Barnabas propoſed to take Mark with them, Paul objected to him,

* Acts xv. 34.

on account of his having left them before; and not being able to agree, they took different routs, Barnabas being accompanied by Mark, and Paul by Silas; and as Barnabas choſe to go to Cyprus, Paul took the road through Syria and Cilicia; each of them beginning his progreſs through thoſe countries with which he was beſt acquainted*.

Of what Barnabas did in this progreſs, and to the end of his life, we are not informed; but Paul being attended in a great meaſure by Luke, the writer of the book of Acts, we are happily well acquainted with his ſubſequent hiſtory; and as he laboured more than any of the apoſtles in the propagation of the goſpel, and was more ſucceſsful in it, eſpecially in Gentile countries, and above all in Greece, the ſeat of learning and the arts, it is by far of the moſt importance for us to be informed of the particulars of *his* progreſs. We cannot, indeed, be without our wiſhes to know more of the hiſtory, public and private, of the reſt of the apoſtles, and others who diſtinguiſhed themſelves by their early attachment to chriſtianity, but it is a curioſity which, for wiſe reaſons, no doubt, it has not pleaſed divine providence to gratify. As to

* Acts xv. 41.

any *honour* which, from this circumſtance, might have accrued to them, it it not probable that they had any deſire or thought of the kind. It was eſteemed enough by them to partake of that glory which will be revealed at the great day, when every man's virtues and exertions will be ſufficiently known, and when merit will be better appreciated than it can be at preſent. Let this conſideration leſſen our deſire for what is called immortality in this world, in having our names tranſmitted with applauſe to diſtant generations; extending our views to that which will commence when this world, and what is uſually called *time*, ſhall be no more.

But dropping theſe reflections, let us attend to the progreſs of Paul; and now we ſhall find him not contenting himſelf with viſiting the churches which he had planted before, but greatly extending his circuit, and planting many new churches, and far more conſiderable ones, in the more diſtant parts of Aſia Minor, and alſo in Greece. Having paſſed through Syria and Cilicia, he came to Derbe and Lyſtra, which he had viſited in his former journey; and at the latter of theſe places he took Timothy to accompany him in his farther progreſs. This young man was

was one of the moſt diſtinguiſhed of Paul's diſciples, and though his father was a Greek, yet as his mother was a Jeweſs, he cauſed him to be circumciſed; which ſufficiently ſhews that, notwithſtanding Paul's zeal for the liberty of the Gentile chriſtians, he believed in the obligation of the laws of Moſes upon all who were of Jewiſh extraction*.

As in his former progreſs Paul had viſited only the ſouthern and interior parts of Aſia Minor, he now directed his courſe through the northren and weſtern parts; going through Galatia and Phrygia; but being admoniſhed by the ſpirit not to preach at that time in Aſia Proper, or that province of which Epheſus was the capital, he went to Myſia; and wherever he came he recited the epiſtle of the church at Jeruſalem, which gave ſuch ſatisfaction to the Gentile converts, that the churches formerly eſtabliſhed were confirmed, and their numbers were encreaſed. From Myſia, Paul had intended to go to Bythinia; but being directed by the ſpirit of God, he came to Troas, a city on the coaſt of the Ægean ſea, over againſt Macedonia; and there he appears to have been joined by Luke

* Acts xvi. 3.

the

the writer of the hiſtory, as from this time he uſes the plural number *we*, &c. That chriſtian churches were every where eſtabliſhed in all the places through which Paul had paſſed, appears from the ſubſequent hiſtory, though no mention is made of them in this conciſe account.

Paul was now come to the weſtern extremity of Aſia Minor, and his purpoſe to croſs the ſea, and viſit Greece, was ſuggeſted to him by a viſion, in which a man of Macedonia appeared to him, and intreated him to go and help them. Accordingly, he and his company went firſt to the iſland Samothrace, and then, landing on the continent at Neapolis, they proceeded to Philippi, the metropolis of that part of Macedonia, and a Roman colony. Having waited a few days, they went on the ſabbath to a place by the river ſide, whither, for want perhaps of a proper ſynagogue, the Jews uſed to reſort for prayer. At this place the women particularly attended, and a convert being made of a woman whoſe name was Lydia, a ſeller of purple (which being a valuable commodity at that time, implies ſome degree of opulence in thoſe who vended it) ſhe prevailed upon

Paul and his companions to go into her houſe, and entertained them ſome days *.

In this place Paul brought himſelf and his companions into difficulty by a moſt benevolent miracle. An inſane woman, thought to be poſſeſſed by a ſpirit which enabled her to tell fortunes, and who by that means had been the ſource of great gains to ſome perſons whoſe ſlave ſhe was, frequently ſhouting after Paul and his friends, and calling them (what ſhe had probably heard of themſelves, or others) the ſervants of the moſt high God, who were come to ſhew them the way of ſalvation; Paul (feeling, no doubt, a divine impulſe) pronounced her cured in the name of Jeſus Chriſt; on which ſhe was inſtantly reſtored to her right mind. The gains of this poor ſlave's maſters vaniſhing with her diſorder, they were ſo provoked, that, ſeizing Paul and Silas, and perſuading the magiſtrates that, being Jews, they were introducing foreign cuſtoms, forbidden by the Roman laws, they procured an order to have them ſeverely ſcourged, and put in priſon.

So far was this unjuſt and cruel treatment from being felt as an affliction by Paul and his companion, that though they were not

* Acts xvi. 15.

only confined by walls, but were farther ſecured by having their feet put in the ſtocks, they ſpent the night in ſinging praiſes to God. It pleaſed the divine being, however, to effect their deliverance in a miraculous manner, and by that means to procure great reſpect to the chriſtian cauſe in this city, the firſt in which the goſpel had been preached on the continent of Greece. For at midnight there was a great earthquake, attended with the opening of the doors of the priſon, and what was infinitely more extraordinary, the looſing of the bonds by which the priſoners were confined.

The keeper of the priſon, awaked by the earthquake, and ſeeing the priſon doors open, drew his ſword, and was going to kill himſelf, rather than ſuffer an ignominious death for the neglect of his duty, with which, he, no doubt, apprehended that he ſhould be charged; but Paul, perceiving his intention, called out to him aloud, telling him they were all ſafe. Thus encouraged, he got a light, and ran into the place; and being much terrified, though pleaſed to find that what Paul had ſaid was true, he fell at their feet, and having probably heard them preach, and been ſomewhat impreſſed by their diſcourſe, and being now convinced of the preſence

ſence of God with them, he eagerly aſked *what he ſhould do to be ſaved.* Whether by *ſalvation* he meant the happineſs of a future ſtate or not, Paul underſtanding him in that ſenſe, replied that, if he believed in Jeſus Chriſt he would be ſaved. Being afterwards more at leiſure in the houſe into which the Jailer had taken his priſoners, they diſcourſed to him more at large concerning the chriſtian religion; and he and his family being convinced of its truth, they were all baptized, and ſpent the remainder of the night in great joy.

When it was day, the magiſtrates, reflecting upon the violence and irregularity of their proceedings, ſent orders to releaſe their priſoners; but Paul, taking advantage of his privilege of a Roman citizen, which he inherited from his father, replied that, as they had acted contrary to the Roman law in ſcourging a citizen of Rome, he would not leave the place till they waited upon him themſelves. At this the magiſtrates were not a little alarmed, and having come, and made their acknowledgments, they prevailed upon them, after much entreaty, to go away. Accordingly, after paying another viſit to Lydia, and encouraging the diſciples they had made,

they

they left Philippi, and paſſing through Amphipolis, and Apollonia; they came to Theſſalonica, where there were Jews*. The reaſon of their making no ſtay at either of the two other places probably was there being few or no Jews in them; and at this time Paul always choſe to addreſs himſelf in the firſt place to the Jews. And it was a great convenience to the preachers of the goſpel to find regular places of worſhip, to which a number of perſons always reſorted, and where they themſelves could conſcientiouſly attend. Alſo, beſides Jews, curioſity generally brought ſome of the Gentiles to their ſynagogues.

At Theſſalonica our miſſionaries were far from deriving any advantage from their countrymen. For after they had preached ſome time, and made ſome diſciples, the unbelieving Jews inſulted them in the groſſeſt manner, aſſaulting the houſe of one Jaſon their friend, and endeavouring to excite the common people againſt them. Not finding them at the houſe of Jaſon, they took him and ſome of the diſciples to the magiſtrates, accuſing them of rebellion againſt the emperor, in conſequence of ſetting up another king called Jeſus. At this the rulers and the peo-

* Acts xvii. 1.

ple were much diſturbed; but not entering into all the violence of the proſecutors, they contented themſelves with taking ſecurity of Jaſon and the other diſciples of the place, and then diſmiſſed Paul and his companions. Apprehenſive however, of the malice of their enemies, they left the place by night, and came to Berea, where they found the Jews better diſpoſed than in moſt other places; for they gave Paul a patient hearing; and, as he appealed to the ſcriptures, they examined by them the truth of what he advanced; and here they made many converts, both of Jews and Greeks; and among them ſeveral women of condition.

But the Jews who had perſecuted them at Theſſalonica, hearing that they were received at Berea, incited the common people to inſult them there alſo. In conſequence of this, the diſciples, after making preparations for ſending away Paul by ſea, conducted him by land to Athens, while Silas and Timothy continued at Berea, intending to follow him as ſoon as poſſible *.

At Athens we find Paul in a ſituation conſiderably different from any that he had been in before, and they who have formed a high

* Acts xvii. 14.

opinion of the learning which was cultivated in that city, cannot but have their curioſity excited to know how he would conduct himſelf there. Far from being intimidated by the fame of the learning of the Athenians, Paul not only diſputed with the Jews in their ſynagogues, as in other cities, but in places of public concourſe with any perſon that came in his way.

After behaving in this manner for ſome time, ſome philoſophers of the Epicurean and Stoic ſects (of whom the former made pleaſure the great end of life, while the latter affected to act upon the maxims of the moſt rigid morality) endeavoured to expoſe him to ridicule; calling him an idle prater. But that not ſilencing him, or anſwering their purpoſe, they brought againſt him a ſerious accuſation of introducing new gods, becauſe he preached about Jeſus and the reſurrection. In anſwer to this charge he was obliged to make his defence before the Areopagus the moſt reſpectable court of judicature in that city, or in all Greece, and which had cognizance of all matters of religion. The judges of this court ſat on benches of ſtone in the open air, and before them Paul was interrogated concerning the new doctrine which he was charged with preaching:

As it was a crime to introduce the worſhip of any new deity, without the authority of the ſtate, Paul, with great addreſs, took advantage of an inſcription which he had ſeen on one of their altars, which was dedicated To THE UNKNOWN GOD, to compliment the Athenians on the attention which they gave to the ſubject of religion; and ſaid that the God which he preached to them, was he to whom they had paid worſhip, though without having ſufficient knowledge of him, viz. the God who made the world and all things in it. This God, he ſaid, unlike the other objects of their worſhip, did not dwell in temples made by men, or ſtand in need of any ſervices which they could render him, ſince he was to all, the giver of life, and of every enjoyment. He added, that what one of their own poets had ſaid of Jupiter, viz. that mankind are his offspring, was eminently true of this God; and hence he argued that, if men are the offſpring of God, and reſemble him, he could not be repreſented by ſuch lifeleſs ſtatues of gold, ſilver, or ſtone, as thoſe to which they paid their devotions. He then informed them that, though God had thought fit to permit this improper worſhip for a time, he now called upon all mankind to abandon it, and

adopt a more rational ſervice of him. He farther aſſured them that God had fixed a day on which he would judge all men according to their works, by Jeſus Chriſt, whom he had appointed for that purpoſe, and that his divine miſſion was confirmed by his reſurrection from the dead.

In this part of his diſcourſe Paul was interrupted by ſome who laughed at the idea of a reſurrection; but, as far as appears, without enquiring into the evidence that Paul could have adduced for it. Others, however, expreſſed a wiſh to hear him farther on this intereſting ſubject, and he was probably diſmiſſed without puniſhment, or cenſure. At Athens, Paul made ſome, though not many converts. Among them, however, was Dionyſius a member of the court before which he had pleaded, and a woman whoſe name was Damaris*.

It is to the honour of Athens, that Paul met with no ill uſage there, but that when he thought proper, after being joined by Timothy, he left that city, and came to Corinth, where he met with a Jew of the name of Aquila, and his wife Priſcilla, who had left Rome in conſequence of Claudius having baniſhed all

* Acts xvii. 34.

Jews

Jews from the metropolis of the empire *. This man was a tent-maker, and Paul having been taught the ſame art, worked with him, and maintained himſelf by his labour. Here, as in other places, Paul attended in the ſynagogue every ſabbath day, and there laboured to convince both Jews and Greeks of the truth of the chriſtian religion, and that Jeſus was the promiſed Meſſiah; and Silas and Timothy having joined him from Macedonia, he exerted himſelf ſtill more, being animated by their ſociety.

* Suetonius, who mentions this baniſhment of the Jews from Rome, ſays it was on account of their continually making tumults at the inſtigation of Chreſtus. Vit. Claudii. C. 25. By this he probably meant Chriſt, and Dr. Benſon ſuppoſes that the tumults he ſpeaks of were ſuch as were occaſioned by their violent oppoſition to chriſtianity at its introduction into Rome; ſimilar to thoſe which they excited in other places on the ſame account. It is indeed probable that chriſtianity had been preached in Rome at this time, and that the zealous Jews oppoſed the introduction of it is equally probable; but as ſuch tumults as theſe could hardly be ſo great as to give occaſion to ſuch a meaſure as the baniſhment of all Jews, chriſtians and others, I ſhould rather think that Suetonius, in whoſe time the chriſtians made a conſiderable figure; and to whom Nero had aſcribed the burning of Rome, imagined, without any reaſon for it, that this edict of Claudius had a ſimilar cauſe. Joſephus takes no notice of this edict, and it is evident from the ſubſequent hiſtory, that it was not of long continuance, whether it expired with the death of Claudius or not.

At length the unbelieving Jews were ſo much offended at Paul, and oppoſed him with ſo much violence, that perceiving they would hear no reaſon, he ſolemnly ſhook his garment in their place of public worſhip, ſaying, "Your blood be upon your own heads, "I am innocent of your ruin, I ſhall now "preach to the Gentiles." Accordingly, quitting the ſynagogue, he from this time made uſe of the houſe of one Juſtus, a pious man, who lived near the place. He had not, however, preached in vain before; for Criſpus, the chief ruler of the ſynagogue, was converted, and many others with him. Farther to encourage Paul, Chriſt appeared to him, and bade him continue to preach with all boldneſs, for that no perſon ſhould hurt him, and that *he had much people in that city*. In conſequence of this he continued there a year and ſix months.

In the mean time, the unbelieving Jews, diſturbed, no doubt, at the many converts which Paul made, brought him before Gallio the Roman governor of the province, accuſing him of teaching men to worſhip God in a manner contrary to the laws of Moſes. But when Gallio found that the charge related only to their religion, he declared that he

would not interfere in any buſineſs of that kind, and diſmiſſed them unheard *.

During Paul's reſidence at Corinth, he wrote two epiſtles to the chriſtians at Theſſalonica, from which place he had been driven by a perſecution which had probably extended to his diſciples: for Timothy having joined Paul at Athens, had by him been ſent back to Theſſalonica, to comfort them under their ſufferings from the unbelieving Jews, and to confirm them in the faith of the goſpel †. In the firſt of the epiſtles which he now wrote to them, beſides having the ſame object with his meſſage by Timothy, he gave them a more particular account of the chriſtian doctrine of the reſurrection, which ſome of them ſeem to have miſapprehended. And happy it is for us that this apoſtle had ſuch an occaſion to explain himſelf ſo fully on this important ſubject, as well as in his epiſtle to the Corinthians afterwards; ſince by this means we are acquainted with ſome particulars concerning it, of which we muſt otherwiſe have been ignorant.

The firſt epiſtle to the Theſſalonians, written A.D. 52, is the oldeſt writing now extant of any chriſtian, and being unqueſtion-

* Acts xviii. 17. † 1 Theſſ. iii. 2.

ably authentic, and written not long after, but even during, the time of the tranſactions to which it alludes, it ſupplies the moſt indiſputable evidence of ſeveral of thoſe facts which are inſeparably connected with, and neceſſarily imply, the truth of every thing that is eſſential in the chriſtian hiſtory.

The ſecond epiſtle to the Theſſalonians was written not many months after the firſt, which appears to have been very favourably received; but Paul wrote this ſecond in order to give the chriſtians of that place ſome farther admonitions, and alſo ſome information with reſpect to the miſtakes which they were ſtill under, eſpecially as to the near approach of the day of judgment. Both theſe epiſtles abound with excellent moral precepts, expreſſed with great energy, which clearly ſhews that the great object of the preachers of the goſpel had nothing of ambition or ſelfiſhneſs in it; but that it was intended to reform the world, and to prepare men by good diſpoſitions and good conduct in this life, for the proper employment and happineſs of another.

From Corinth alſo it is probable that Paul wrote the epiſtle to the churches of Galatia, which had been troubled by ſome Jewiſh

converts,

converts, who had conceived, and endeavoured to propagate, prejudices againſt his authority, and, who had inculcated the neceſſity of the Gentile converts conforming to circumciſion, and all the inſtitutions of Moſes. On this account Paul, in this epiſtle, enlarges on the evidence of his apoſtolical authority, as what he had received from Chriſt himſelf, and not from the other apoſtles. This he ſhews by a ſuccinct account of his hiſtory; and he endeavours by a variety of arguments to keep thoſe to whom he writes, firm in the profeſſion and practice of the pure goſpel of Chriſt, unadulterated with any mixture from the inſtitutions of Moſes, as they were not obligatory upon the Gentile converts. He concludes this, as well as his other epiſtles, with practical admonitions and exhortations.

If the epiſtle to Titus was written, as Dr. Lardner ſuppoſes, from Macedonia, in Paul's third journey, it is probable that he viſited Crete from Corinth at this time; as he does not appear ever to have been nearer to Crete than he was now, and to Titus he had committed the care of the churches in that iſland.

Paul continued at Corinth ſome time after this, and then thinking to return to Syria, he

took Aquila and Priſcilla with him; and having ſhaved his head at Cenchrea, the port of Corinth (for he had made ſome vow, and ſcrupulouſly conformed to the Jewiſh ritual with reſpect to it) he took ſhip there, and ſailed to Epheſus, where he left his two companions. As for himſelf, he, according to his cuſtom, attended the ſynagogue worſhip in the place, and preached to the Jews who reſorted to it. But though he was preſſed to continue ſome time at Epheſus, he declined it, alleging that he muſt of neceſſity be at Jeruſalem at the next feſtival; and promiſing to return, if it pleaſed God, he left his friends there, and went by ſea to Cæſarea. Having gone thence to Jeruſalem, to ſhew his reſpect to the church there, he returned to Antioch from which he had ſet out*.

This was a moſt important journey, as by means of it the knowledge of the goſpel was much extended, chriſtian churches being now planted in the moſt conſiderable cities of Aſia Minor, Macedonia, and Greece; and from theſe cities chriſtianity would ſoon ſpread itſelf to the neighbouring towns of leſs note, and from them to the villages. This brings the hiſtory of chriſtianity to A. D. 53.

* Acts xviii. 22.

SEC-

SECTION VI.

From Paul's third Journey to his Confinement at Jeruſalem.

PAUL having continued ſome time at Antioch, but probably not a whole year, ſet out upon his third apoſtolical journey, to preach the goſpel in Aſia and Greece; and having made a regular progreſs through Galatia, and Phrygia, he came to Epheſus, where he had left Aquila and Priſcilla, and where, in his abſence, had been Apollos, a Jew of Alexandria, very eloquent and well verſed in the ſcriptures, but only acquainted with the preaching and baptiſm of John, till by Aquila and Priſcilla he was informed of the doctrine of Chriſt. Being diſpoſed to paſs into Achaia the diſciples recommended them to their brethren there, and he was of great uſe in that country, in ſtrengthening the believers, and making converts among the Jews; convincing them from the ſcriptures that Jeſus was the Meſſiah. Apollos was at Corinth when Paul arrived at Epheſus.

Here

Here Paul meeting with a company of twelve men, beſides women, who like Apollos, had been baptized by John, but were unacquainted with the doctrine of Chriſt, he inſtructed them in it, and baptized them in the name of Chriſt. After this Paul laid his hands on them, and the Holy Spirit came upon them, ſo that they ſpake with tongues, and propheſied*.

At Epheſus, Paul, as he had done at other places, began with reſorting to the Jewiſh ſynagogue, and preaching there, which he now did for about three months; but this being attended with much wrangling, he quitted that place, and taught in the ſchool of one Tyrannus, probably a heathen philoſopher, and perhaps converted by him. Here Paul continued two years; and preaching in the neighbouring cities as well as at Epheſus, all the country of Aſia properly ſo called had an opportunity of being well acquainted with the principles of the chriſtian religion. It pleaſed the divine Being alſo, upon this occaſion, to add the ſanction of miracles in a very diſtinguiſhing manner to the preaching of Paul; ſo that even when the handkerchiefs and aprons

* Acts xix. 6.

of

of ſick perſons were brought to him, their diſeaſes were cured, and ſome of the perſons relieved by him were Demoniacs.

Some Jewiſh exorciſts, ſeven ſons of one Sceva a Jew, and chief of the prieſts, perceiving this, and thinking there muſt be ſome powerful charm in the invocation of the name of Jeſus, repeated it over a demoniac, ſaying, "We adjure thee by Jeſus whom Paul "preaches." But the madman, not being reſtored to his right mind, though diſtinguiſhing what they ſaid, inſulted them, and fell violently upon them, ſaying, "Jeſus I know, "and Paul I know, but who are ye," and they did not eſcape without wounds. This event made much noiſe in the town and country, and the ſucceſs of Paul and of theſe exorciſts being ſo manifeſtly different, it brought a great acceſſion of reputation to Paul, and was the means of gaining him many converts. At the ſame time the inefficacy and folly of all magical rites was ſo apparent, that great numbers brought their books containing ſuch ſecrets, and burned them publicly; and though they might have been ſold for fifty thouſand pieces of ſilver (equal probably to eight hundred pounds) they choſe to make this ſacrifice, rather than contribute to the ſpread

ſpread of ſuch wicked and miſchievous arts by the ſale of them *.

At Epheſus Paul was applied to by meſſengers from Corinth, where, as well as in Galatia, attempts had been made to leſſen his authority; and where ſome perſons diſtinguiſhed by their eloquence, and boaſting of their knowledge, had taught that the chriſtian reſurrection was not a literal riſing from the dead, but ſomething elſe; either a change of life and conduct, or the emancipation of the ſoul from its confinement in the body. Theſe perſons, therefore, evidently held the Gnoſtic opinions, and this is the firſt time we meet with the mention of them among chriſtians. For the philoſophers of that age, believing in the inherent evil nature of matter, and that the ſoul was only confined in the body for a time, thought it would be moſt conſummately happy when it was diſcharged from its fleſhy incumbrance.

On this account Paul, in his epiſtle to the Corinthians, aſſerts at large the reality of a proper reſurrection, in imitation of that of Chriſt, on which the whole of the chriſtian ſcheme depended; aſſuring them that that which was committed to the grave would riſe

* Acts xix. 19.

again,

again, but changed in its nature and properties, from mortal to immortal, from corruptible to incorruptible, from earthly to heavenly. He alſo anſwers a variety of queſtions which they had propoſed to him relating to the Lord's ſupper, ſpiritual gifts, marriage (which their Gnoſtic teachers had conſidered as a defilement) abſtaining from feaſts in honour of idols, which ſome of them thought to be very innocent, and from fornication, which the religion of the heathens countenanced on thoſe occaſions, and to which the inhabitants of the luxurious city of Corinth were remarkably addicted.

Paul's addreſs to them on theſe and other ſubjects, ſhews that many of theſe firſt converts, though they were convinced of the truth of chriſtianity, were not immediately reformed by it, but continued addicted to the ſenſual gratifications in which they had indulged themſelves before, and that it was not without difficulty that they were brought off from them. And we may eaſily believe that many perſons of good ſenſe, and competent judges of evidence, but whoſe lives and moral characters were far from being irreproachable, might be convinced of the truth of chriſtianity, but that it would be ſome time before

before it effected a reformation of their conduct.

In this epiſtle Paul alſo aſſerts his own apoſtolical authority, and endeavours to make the Corinthian converts think leſs highly of the boaſted eloquence of their new teachers, who ſeem, like the philoſophers and rhetoricians of thoſe times, to have received money for their harangues. He therefore ſhews the difference between his own conduct and theirs in that reſpect.

From Epheſus, Paul ſent Timothy and Eraſtus before him into Macedonia, as he intended to go that way into Achaia, which he had done before. His farther view was to return to Jeruſalem, and in another journey to go as far as Rome. But while he continued at Epheſus, in the abſence of Timothy and Eraſtus, there was a great tumult in the city, occaſioned by one Demetrius, and others who made what are called *ſilver ſhrines* for Diana, a goddeſs who was worſhipped in a magnificent temple, and with great pomp, at Epheſus. Theſe people, ſeeing the great progreſs that Paul and his companions made in converting the people to chriſtianity, and conſequently bringing them off from the worſhip of Diana,

clearly foreſaw, if they did not already feel, a great diminution of their profits.

In this tumult two of Paul's friends, Gaius and Ariſtarchus, who were of Macedonia, were ſeized, and carried into the public theatre; and on this Alexander, a Jew (being probably a good ſpeaker, and a man of ſome influence in the place) was brought by his brethren into the theatre, to endeavour to appeaſe the multitude; but the authors of the tumult prevented him by inceſſantly ſhouting, as they had done ſome time before, *Great is Diana of the Epheſians*. However, the chief magiſtrate in the place inſiſting upon being heard, reproved the people for the diſturbance that had been made, which he ſaid was altogether unjuſtifiable, as they had no crime to lay to the charge of Paul or his friends; adding, that if they had any juſt accuſation againſt them they ſhould be heard in a regular aſſembly. By this means an end was put to the tumult, and preſently after Paul left Epheſus, and went, as he had propoſed, to Macedonia, leaving Timothy, who had arrived before he ſet out*.

From Macedonia, Paul wrote his firſt epiſtle to Timothy, to whom he had intruſted

* Acts xx. 1.

the

the care of the church of Epheſus; and from this epiſtle it appears that this church was then infected with the Gnoſtic doctrines, by perſons pretending to ſcience and philoſophy, who deſpiſed the plain preaching of Paul. He therefore urges Timothy ſtrenuouſly to oppoſe the progreſs of thoſe opinions, and he gives him many excellent advices relating to the conduct of himſelf, and of the church which was committed to his care.

It is alſo ſuppoſed that Paul wrote at this time his epiſtle to Titus; and as it is very ſimilar to the epiſtle to Timothy, it is evident that the churches in Crete muſt have been in the ſame ſtate with that at Epheſus, gnoſticiſm having been introduced there, as well as into other churches. For that being the philoſophy of the times, the converts who had made profeſſion of it, would naturally be inclined to mix their peculiar tenets with the chriſtian doctrines. When Paul wrote to Titus, he propoſed to paſs the winter in Nicopolis, and urged him to come to him thither*.

From Macedonia it is probable that Paul, at this time, paſſed into Illyricum, and that before he left this country, or Macedonia, he

* I am by no means ſatisfied about the time in which Paul wrote his epiſtle to Titus.

wrote his ſecond epiſtle to the Corinthians. He had been very anxious about the reception of his former epiſtle, which had been ſent by Titus, who was to have met him at Troas, after he left Epheſus, but who did not join him till he arrived in Macedonia. Here Titus gave Paul ſuch an account of the ſituation of things at Corinth, and of the effect of his former epiſtle, as gave him great encouragement, though he ſaw ſufficient reaſon to write a ſecond epiſtle before he went to that city in perſon. This alſo was ſent by Titus, who returned to Corinth, in order to promote a collection for the poor chriſtians at Jeruſalem. In this ſecond epiſtle Paul explains himſelf farther with reſpect to ſome ſubjects of which he had treated in the former. He alſo enforces his admonitions againſt the Gnoſtic teachers, by whom that church had been miſled.

Paul, having preached with much aſſiduity, at length departed from theſe northern regions, and arrived in Greece properly ſo called, A. D. 58; his chief object being Corinth. Here he ſtayed three months, and finding himſelf at leiſure, wrote a large epiſtle to the chriſtians at Rome. It does not appear who had preached chriſtianity in this city; but as

there was a perpetual concourſe of people, of all deſcriptions, from all parts of the empire to the metropolis, nothing could be tranſacted in the moſt diſtant provinces that would not ſoon be known there; and chriſtians, as well as others, having buſineſs in Rome, their zeal would naturally prompt them to communicate to others what they were acquainted with, and valued, themſelves. Alſo, many perſons being converted to chriſtianity at Rome, would make more converts on their return to thoſe provinces to which they belonged. Thus the vaſt extent of the Roman empire, which comprehended almoſt all the civilized part of the world, was a circumſtance exceedingly favourable to the ſpeedy propagation of the goſpel. It is alſo a circumſtance peculiarly favourable to the evidence of chriſtianity, that it took the deepeſt root in the moſt civilized and learned, and conſequently the moſt inquiſitive, part of the world.

It appears from this epiſtle that they were Jews who were moſt active in preaching the goſpel at Rome, and that there as well as in other places they had inculcated their peculiar prejudices in conjunction with it. For they had endeavoured to impoſe the yoke of the Moſaic inſtitutions upon the Gentile chriſtians

chriſtians there; and it was chiefly with a view to correct this error, that Paul, who juſtly conſidered himſelf as the apoſtle of the Gentiles, and conſequently the aſſertor of their rights, wrote this epiſtle. For this is the great object of it. At the ſame time, however, he endeavours to give thoſe to whom he writes a very high, but a ſtrictly juſt idea of the value of chriſtianity, as oppoſed to the heatheniſh rites in which they had been educated, and in which the moſt unnatural vices had been practiced. In oppoſition to every thing of this kind, he ſtrongly inculcates the excellent moral precepts of chriſtianity.

At Corinth, as well as in other places, the unbelieving Jews did Paul every ill office in their power. At this time, they even laid wait for him, probably intending to murder him; but he eſcaped from them by going firſt to Macedonia; whereas they had imagined that he would go directly to Syria, and had, no doubt, laid their plan accordingly. In Macedonia, Paul was joined by Sopater of Berea, Ariſtarchus and Secundus of Theſſalonica, Gaius of Derbe, and Timothy. There were alſo with him from Aſia, Tychicus and Trophimus. All theſe perſons going before, waited for him (who was accompanied by

Luke) at Troas, where he arrived, after ſpending the Eaſter at Philippi *.

At Troas Paul and his company ſpent ſeven days, of which the laſt was the Lord's day; and as he was to depart on the morrow, he was led to prolong his diſcourſe to the aſſembled church till midnight; in conſequence of which, a young man of the name of Eutychus, who had ſeated himſelf in a higher part of the building, being overcome with ſleep, fell down, and was taken up dead; but Paul praying over him, he was preſently reſtored to life. After this interruption, Paul continued with the diſciples till day-break; and having received the communion with them, he departed.

From Troas Paul went on foot to Aſſos, where his friends, who had gone thither by ſea, took him in, and proceeded to Mytelene. When they were come to Miletus, Paul, who was determined not to make any ſtay in Aſia, leſt he ſhould be prevented from arriving at Jeruſalem at the time that he had fixed, ſent for the elders of the church of Epheſus, and addreſſed them in a moſt affectionate and excellent ſpeech; in which he recited the particulars of his own conduct among them, and

* Acts xx. 6.

exhorted

exhorted them to imitate him in their care of the church. After concluding with prayer, they parted from each other with many tears, eſpecially as Paul had told them, that they muſt not expect to ſee him any more*.

Paul and his company then proceeded on their voyage, and at length arrived at Tyre, whither the ſhip they were in was bound. There they found chriſtians with whom they ſtayed ſeven days; and here ſome who had the ſpirit of prophecy warned Paul not to go to Jeruſalem. But without attending to the admonition, he took leave of them as he had done of the elders of Epheſus; and with every mark of affection, and with a great crowd of women and children, they accompanied him to the ſhip. They next proceeded to Ptolemais, where they ſtayed one day, and the day after they arrived at Cæſarea, where they were received by Philip the evangeliſt, the ſame who had converted the eunuch of Ethiopia. He had four daughters who were propheteſſes.

Here Paul and his friends continued ſome time; having it now in their power, without the uncertainty attending a paſſage by ſea, to proceed to Jeruſalem whenever they pleaſed;

* Acts xx. 38.

and while they continued here there came from Jeruſalem the ſame Agabus, who had foretold the famine in the time of Claudius. He, in imitation of the ancient prophets, who often expreſſed themſelves by ſymbols, cauſed himſelf to be bound hand and foot with Paul's girdle, and ſaid that, in the ſame manner, would the Jews of Jeruſalem bind the owner of that girdle, and deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles. On this all the company earneſtly entreated Paul that he would not proceed to Jeruſalem; but he, with a noble magnanimity, replied, that he was ready not only to be bound, but alſo to ſuffer death at Jeruſalem in the cauſe of Chriſt. After this they uſed no farther intreaties, but with the ſame reſignation, ſaid *the will of God be done*. Then being joined by Mnaſon, an old diſciple of Cyprus, and other chriſtians of Cæſarea, they went together to Jeruſalem; when their fellow chriſtians received them with joy*. This was at pentecoſt, A. D. 58, eight years before the commencement of the famous Jewiſh war.

* Acts xxi. 17.

SEC-

SECTION VII.

From Paul's confinement at Jeruſalem to his arrival at Rome, A. D. 61. *and his employment there.*

THE day after Paul's arrival at Jeruſalem he went to James, and the elders of the church; and when he had given them an account of his ſucceſs in extending the knowledge of the goſpel, they rejoiced at it; but informed him, that there were many thouſands of the Jewiſh chriſtians at Jeruſalem, exceedingly zealous for the obſervance of the law, who had heard that he had taught even the Jews in Gentile countries to abandon the inſtitutions of Moſes, and diſcontinue the circumciſing of their children. In order to refute this calumny, they adviſed him to ſhew his conformity to the law by the public obſervance of ſome of its rites. Accordingly, he accompanied four men who had a vow on them, and purified himſelf along with them, by ſacrifices and other ceremonies. This would have taken up ſeven days, but before they were expired, ſome Jews from Aſia, ſeeing him in the temple, cauſed him to be apprehended in a tumultu-

ous manner, alleging that wherever he had been he had taught things contrary to the people of the Jews, the law, and the temple, and likewiſe that he had brought Greeks into the temple, and had thereby polluted that holy place*. For they had ſeen him in the city accompanied by Trophimus an Epheſian, and took it for granted that he had taken him into the temple.

In this tumult, in which a great part of the city was involved, Paul would have been deſtroyed, if Lyſias, the Roman governor of the city had not reſcued him. He thought it neceſſary, however, to ſecure him by binding him, and ordering him to be lodged in a caſtle adjoining to the temple. But the tumult ſtill continuing as they were carrying him away, Paul aſked leave to ſpeak to the people. On this the governor, probably hearing him ſpeak in Greek, expreſſed ſome ſurprize at it, having ſuppoſed that he might have been an Egyptian, who ſometime before had made a rebellion in the country; but Paul told him that he was a Jew, and a citizen of Tarſus.

Having leave to ſpeak, Paul addreſſed the multitude in Hebrew, and in a ſpeech of conſiderable length, gave them an account of his hiſ-

* Acts xxi. 28.

tory and converſion to chriſtianity. But when he came to ſpeak of his being ſent to the Gentiles, his audience were not able to reſtrain themſelves any longer, but exclaimed againſt him as a perſon not fit to live*. On this the governor commanded him to be brought into the caſtle, and was proceeding to examine him by torture, and had him bound for that purpoſe, when Paul informed them that, being a Roman citizen, they could not legally ſcourge him. This intimidated the governor, who therefore contented himſelf with bringing Paul, unbound, the next day before the Jewiſh ſanhedrim.

Twenty-three years had now elapſed ſince Paul had been in the confidence of the chief rulers of his country, and employed by them in the perſecution of the chriſtians, ſo that at this time many of them muſt have been unknown to him, and among theſe perhaps was the high-prieſt Ananias. For when, upon his declaring his innocence, this ſupreme magiſtrate irregularly and unjuſtly ordered a perſon to ſtrike him; being provoked, but not intimidated, he replied "God ſhall ſmite thee "thou whited wall, for ſitting to judge me "according to the law, and commanding me

* Acts xxii. 22.

"to

"to be ſmitten contrary to the law;" and being reproved for it, as reviling God's high-prieſt, he ſaid that he did not know that he was the high-prieſt.

This intrepid behaviour of Paul might perhaps diſpoſe his judges to reſpect him more than they had done. The court, however, appears to have been more compoſed after this irregular proceeding; and Paul, having the preſence of mind to view his judges with attention, and recollecting many of them, perceived that ſome of them were Sadducees and others Phariſees; and hoping to divide them, and to avail himſelf of their difference of opinion, he cried out that he was a Phariſee, and the ſon of a Phariſee; and that it was for holding the doctrine of the Phariſees, viz. the reſurrection of the dead, that he was brought before them. This produced the effect that he wiſhed. For the Phariſees took his part, ſaying, it was poſſible that an angel, or a ſpirit (the exiſtence of which the Sadducees denied) might have ſpoken to him; and, perhaps recollecting the advice of Gamaliel on a ſimilar occaſion, they ſaid that they ought not to fight againſt God. The governor ſeeing this diviſion, and the tumult which it produced; and fearing leſt his priſoner ſhould be torn in pieces

pieces among them, ſent ſoldiers, and took him by force into the caſtle. The night following this, Jeſus appeared to Paul, and encouraged him; telling him that as he had borne his teſtimony to him in Jeruſalem, he ſhould do the ſame in Rome *.

The next day, the unbelieving Jews being exceedingly exaſperated againſt Paul, more than forty of them bound themſelves with an oath, not to eat or drink till they had killed him. This, however, came to the knowledge of a ſon of Paul's ſiſter, and he, by application to the governor prevented the execution of their deſign. For Lyſias immediately ſent him under a ſtrong guard to Cæſarea, the reſidence of the Roman prefect Felix, with a letter, informing him of the reaſons why he had ſent him; that he did not perceive that he was charged with any offence of a civil nature, but that he had acquainted his accuſers that they might carry their complaints to his tribunal. Accordingly Felix ordered him to be confined, till his accuſers ſhould appear againſt him †.

Five days after this, Ananias the high-prieſt himſelf, with other leading men of the Jews, came to Cæſarea, and employed an orator of the name of Tertullus to open the

* Acts xxiii. 11. † Acts xxiii. 35.

charge

charge againſt Paul. It conſiſted of three articles, viz. that he was a mover of ſedition through all the world, that he had prophaned the temple, and that he was a ringleader of the ſect of the Nazarenes. To this Paul replied, that with reſpect to the two firſt articles, they could not prove what they had alleged; that he had raiſed no tumult, that they had not even found him diſputing with any perſon, and that in the temple he was performing the uſual rites of purification together with other Jews from Aſia; but he acknowledged that according to the ſect which his enemies called *hereſy*, he did worſhip the God of his fathers, believing eſpecially the reſurrection of the dead, in the faith of which he endeavoured to act with good conſcience towards God and man. Felix, perceiving the malice of Paul's proſecutors, and the inſufficiency of their proofs with reſpect to the article of ſedition, which was all that he was concerned to enquire into, diſmiſſed them till the arrival of Lyſias, when he ſaid he ſhould have an opportunity of forming a better judgment in the caſe. In the mean time he committed Paul to the cuſtody of a centurion, but with orders that all his friends ſhould have free acceſs to him *.

* Acts xxiv. 23.

After

After ſome time Felix, accompanied by his wife Druſilla (who was ſiſter to king Agrippa, and a woman of looſe character) indulged his curioſity in enquiring of Paul concerning the chriſtian religion. But in explaining the principles of it Paul ſpake with ſo much force concerning the duties of temperance and juſtice, which had been ſhamefully violated by his hearers, and alſo concerning a future judgment, that Felix was ſenſibly moved by his diſcourſe, and diſmiſſing him for the preſent, ſaid that he would ſend for him again when he ſhould have more leiſure to hear him.

Felix, being an avaricious man, was not without hope that Paul's friends, who he might perceive were very conſiderable, would have advanced money for his releaſe; and with this view he often ſent for him; but being diſappointed in this expectation, and fearing the reſentment of the Jews, to whom he had made himſelf very obnoxious, when he was ſucceeded in his government by Feſtus, he left Paul a priſoner*. Felix was a man of low extraction, who had been advanced by the intereſt of his brother Pallas, a freed man and favourite of the emperor Claudius; and when he was accuſed by the Jews

* Acts xxiv. 27.

before

before Nero, who was now emperor, he was condemned, but eſcaped puniſhment by the intereſt of Agrippina Nero's mother.

Feſtus, on his arrival in Judea, went directly to Jeruſalem, where he found the high-prieſt and the leading men ſtill violent againſt Paul, but he referred them to a public hearing at Cæſarea. Accordingly they went thither once more, and were, as before, loud in their accuſations of Paul, but incapable of proving any thing on which a ſentence could be paſſed upon him. The governor, however, willing to oblige the leading Jews on his arrival in his province, propoſed to remove the priſoner to Jeruſalem, and try him there. But Paul, tired with theſe delays, availed himſelf of his privilege of a Roman citizen, and appealed to the judgment of the emperor; and to this Feſtus conſented*.

Soon after this Feſtus was viſited by king Agrippa the younger, who had ſucceeded his father, and by his ſiſter Berenice†. To theſe gueſts the governor related the caſe of his pri-

* Acts xxv. 12.

† This Berenice had been married to her uncle Herod of Chalcis, and was at that time ſuſpected of having a criminal connection with her brother. She was afterwards the great favourite of the emperor Titus, being a woman of exquiſite beauty.

ſoner, which ſo much excited the curioſity of Agrippa, that he expreſſed a wiſh to hear Paul himſelf. To this Feſtus conſented the more willingly, as, being obliged to ſend him to Rome, and of courſe to give ſome account of him, he hoped that by means of this audience he ſhould be able to draw up a more ſatisfactory account than at preſent he knew how to do.

Paul, being produced for this purpoſe, expreſſed much ſatisfaction in having an opportunity of explaining his principles before a Jewiſh prince, who was acquainted with thoſe prophecies to which he ſhould have occaſion to appeal. Then proceeding to give an account of himſelf, and eſpecially of his miraculous converſion to chriſtianity, Feſtus (who being a heathen, was not diſpoſed to give much attention to accounts of miracles, and who probably entertained that contempt for the religion of the Jews which was common among perſons of rank, who had made no enquiry concerning it) ſaid that he was certainly out of his ſenſes, and that much ſtudy had diſordered his mind; ſo that what he had related might all have paſſed in his imagination only. But Agrippa, who was a believer in miracles, could not ſo readily deny this, and,

no doubt conſidering the circumſtances of it, acknowledged that he was almoſt perſuaded to be a chriſtian. To this Paul with great preſence of mind, and much politeneſs, replied, "I would to God that not only thou, but alſo "all that hear me this day, were both almoſt, "and altogether, ſuch as I am, except theſe "bonds." With this the conference cloſed; and it was agreed by them all, that he might have been ſet at liberty, if he had not appealed to the emperor*.

Paul, according to his ſentence, was ſent to Rome under the cuſtody of a centurion named Julius, who behaved to him with great civility; giving him leave, when they came to Sidon, to land and ſee his friends. When they had proceeded as far as Crete, it was revealed to Paul, that if they went any farther, at that late ſeaſon of the year, it would be with great riſque, not only of the ſhip, and of the lading, but alſo of their lives. However, the centurion choſe to liſten to the maſter and owner of the ſhip, and put to ſea. But they were ſoon overtaken by a tempeſt, during which Paul told the crew, that the ſhip would be loſt, but all their lives ſaved; and accordingly they with difficulty got to ſhore

* Acts xxvi. 32.

on

on the iſland Malta, the ſhip being ſtranded and daſhed to pieces*.

On this iſland the ſhipwrecked crew were received with great hoſpitality; and here it pleaſed God to diſtinguiſh Paul by ſome remarkable miracles. As he had got a bundle of ſticks, and was laying them on the fire, a viper, which had not been perceived among them, feeling the heat, faſtened on his hand; which led the natives to imagine that he was a murderer, who, though he had not periſhed in the ſhipwreck, was now overtaken by divine vengeance. But when he ſhook it off without receiving any harm, they concluded that he muſt be a god. What farther impreſſion was made on their minds by this extraordinary circumſtance does not appear; but it is probable that it drew much attention upon him. For the father of Publius, the governor of the iſland, being ill of a fever and a bloody flux, Paul (having probably been ſent for on the occaſion) prayed over him, and cured him; and upon this other ſick perſons were brought to him, and were cured.

Having wintered in Malta, Paul and his company proceeded early in the ſpring (A. D. 61) towards Rome, calling at Syra-

* Acts xxvii. 44.

cuſe, Rhegium, and Puteoli, at which laſt place Paul found ſome chriſtian brethren, and at Appii forum and the Three Taverns, he was met by ſome chriſtians from Rome, and was by them accompanied thither. Being now arrived at the place of his deſtination, he was delivered by the centurion to the cuſtody of a ſoldier, who was chained to him; but in other reſpects he was at his liberty, and thus he continued two whole years, in a houſe which he hired, and had no reſtraint put upon him with reſpect to ſeeing or receiving any body; a liberty which we cannot doubt he made uſe of in favour of the goſpel.

When Paul had been in Rome three days, he ſent for the chief men among the Jews, and gave them an account of himſelf, and of the cauſe of his being ſent thither. On this a day was fixed for a public hearing of him; and the conſequence of it was, that ſome of them, as in other places, became converts to chriſtianity, while the reſt were obſtinate in their unbelief; ſo that Paul informed them that, ſeeing no proſpect of making any impreſſion upon them, he ſhould apply himſelf to the Gentiles.

We have no account of Paul's trial before the emperor; but it may be collected from the

the epiſtles which he wrote from Rome, that though his friends deſerted him upon that occaſion, he was enabled to deliver himſelf with great boldneſs; and that many perſons, either from what he ſaid on that occaſion, or at other times, became converts to chriſtianity, and among them were ſome of the emperor's family. He was probably reſerved for a farther hearing, and after two years he had his liberty given him.

At Rome, Paul, having leiſure to write, as well as to preach, wrote ſeveral valuable epiſtles, as that to the Epheſians, a ſecond to Timothy, to the Philippians, to the Coloſſians, and to Philemon. He alſo wrote the epiſtle to the Hebrews, a little before, or ſoon after, his releaſe. Conſidering the number of epiſtles which he wrote from Rome, it is rather remarkable that he did not write ſo much as one during his equally long confinement in Judea, as it does not appear that he was not at liberty to write.

The object of the epiſtle to the Epheſians is to eſtabliſh the chriſtians of Epheſus, to whom he had preached a long time, in the pure faith of the goſpel, and to counteract the endeavours of the Jewiſh teachers to bring them into bondage to the law of Moſes. But

though it is probable, from the firſt epiſtle to Timothy, that theſe Jewiſh teachers were Gnoſtics, there is no direct reference to any peculiar Gnoſtic opinions in this epiſtle. What he chiefly labours is to impreſs the minds of thoſe to whom he wrote with a juſt ſenſe of the value of the goſpel, of the goodneſs of God in calling the gentiles to the privileges of it, and the importance of moral and relative duties.

There is a peculiar dignity and ſublimity in this epiſtle, as well as evident marks of the ſtrong affection that Paul bore to all his chriſtian converts; and the ſame has been obſerved with reſpect to all the epiſtles which he wrote from Rome. He probably knew that he was near the cloſe of his life, and therefore he wrote with that energy with which a man naturally gives his laſt admonitions to thoſe he loves.

It is moſt probable that the ſecond epiſtle to Timothy was written not long after Paul's arrival at Rome, and in the ſpring or beginning of ſummer, as he preſſes him to come to him before winter; and in the other epiſtles from Rome, Timothy appears to have been with Paul; his name being joined with his own in his ſalutations from that place. The de-

ſign of this epiſtle, beſides urging Timothy to come to him, was to encourage him to perſevere in preaching the goſpel, notwithſtanding the oppoſition he might meet with, the corruptions that would be introduced into it, and the degeneracy of many who bore the chriſtian name. In this epiſtle there are evident alluſions to the Gnoſtic doctrines, as there alſo were in the firſt epiſtle to Timothy. It is probable, therefore, that the Gnoſtics were numerous at Epheſus, as well as at Corinth; though Paul might not chuſe to mention them in the epiſtle to the Epheſians themſelves.

The chriſtians at Philippi were probably wealthy, and they were proportionably generous, as they contributed largely to the apoſtle's ſupport, when other churches were inattentive to his circumſtances. They had not been unmindful of his ſituation now that he was a priſoner at Rome, but had ſent Epaphroditus, one of their body, with a liberal contribution for his relief. This he gratefully acknowledges in this epiſtle, the principal object of which, as of many others, is to exhort thoſe to whom he writes to perſevere in the purity of the goſpel, and to reſiſt the attempts of the Judaizing teachers to ſow diviſions among them, and eſpecially to re-

commend their profeſſion by a ſuitable life and converſation. The manner in which he ſpeaks of his own ſituation, and the ſatisfaction he expreſſes in all that he had done, and ſuffered, for the ſake of the goſpel, is equally edifying. He appears, when he wrote this epiſtle, to have had hopes of being ſet at liberty; but as to himſelf, he ſays, it was a matter of indifference whether he lived or died, provided his life or death might be ſubſervient, as he was confident either of them would be, to the propagation of the goſpel.

Coloſſe was a conſiderable city in Phrygia, where there appears to have been a chriſtian church pretty early, though it is not known by whom it was planted. Probably, however, it was by ſome of Paul's fellow labourers during his long reſidence at Epheſus, or perhaps by himſelf. His epiſtle to the chriſtians at that place appears to have been written ſome time before the end of the year 62, and to have been ſent along with that to Philemon, by Tychicus and Oneſimus, when Paul had ſome proſpect of his being releaſed from his confinement. The general ſtrain of it is ſo much the ſame with that to the Epheſians, that they are commonly called the two ſiſter epiſtles. In both of them the object of the

apoſtle

apoſtle was to eſtabliſh thoſe to whom they were addreſſed in the pure faith of the goſpel, on the value of which he much enlarges, in oppoſition to the corruption of it by the Jewiſh Gnoſtics; and he ſtrongly urges the practice of moral duties, which the Gnoſtics, too much occupied with matters of ſpeculation, were generally charged with neglecting.

Philemon was a citizen of Coloſſe, whoſe ſlave Oneſimus had run away from him, and probably robbed him; but coming to Rome while Paul was there, and hearing him preach, he not only became a convert to chriſtianity, but made himſelf uſeful to the apoſtle. Being, no doubt, convinced by him of the wrong that he had done his maſter, he was prevailed upon to return to him; and to make his reception the eaſier, Paul gave him this letter, which at the ſame time that it ſhews his juſt ſenſe of moral obligation, diſcovers much polite addreſs; from which it is evident that the apoſtle was no wild enthuſiaſt, but one who was well acquainted with mankind, and human nature.

Notwithſtanding the epiſtle to the Hebrews does not bear the name of Paul, there are, in my opinion, many internal marks of its being his; and it was probably written by

him, if after he was at liberty, before he left Italy, A. D. 63. Like the epiſtle to the Romans, it is properly *a treatiſe*, the object of which is to leſſen the exceſſive regard which the Jewiſh chriſtians of that age entertained for the inſtitutions of Moſes, which made them wiſh to impoſe them on the Gentile converts. With this view the writer endeavours to ſhew the ſuperiority of Chriſt to Moſes, and of the chriſtian diſpenſation to the Jewiſh, in a variety of reſpects; aſſerting that whatever there was that was moſt eſteemed in the inſtitutions of Moſes, there was ſomething of the ſame nature, and ſuperior in kind, in the goſpel. More particularly, as the Jews made great boaſts of their prieſthood, their temple, and their ſacrifices, he finds a temple, a prieſthood, and a ſacrifice in chriſtianity. But in this there was much room for imagination, and for fancying there was a correſpondence in the two ſyſtems, where none was intended in the original conſtitution of them.

After writing this epiſtle, it is conjectured that Paul might go to Jeruſalem; but that finding every thing in confuſion there, as it was but a ſhort time before the breaking out of the Jewiſh war, he did not continue long in the country; and as he had expreſſed an intention

tention of viſiting Spain, it is not improbable but that with this view he went to Rome, and being there at the time of the perſecution by Nero, he was, according to tradition, beheaded by order of that tyrant, or his miniſters; being exempted from torture as a Roman citizen, while Peter, who was there at the ſame time, was crucified.

SECTION VIII.

Of the Labours of the other Apoſtles.

AFTER giving this particular account of Paul, his labours, and his writings, which his own epiſtles, as well as the book of Acts, written by his companion Luke, happily enable us to do; I ſhall give the little that I have been able to collect of what was done, or written, by the other apoſtles, before the deſtruction of Jeruſalem, which was then approaching.

James, called the brother of our Lord, probably ended his courſe during the confinement of Paul at Rome, after writing the epiſtle

tle which bears his name. The object of it is to enforce a variety of moral duties, which were much neglected by the Jews of that age; and it ſeems to have been deſigned for the uſe of the unbelieving, as well as the believing, Jews. It is ſaid that he was generally known by the ſirname of James *the juſt*, no doubt for his exemplary virtue and piety, for which he was highly eſteemed by the ſober part of the nation in general.

According to Euſebius*, the Jews, diſappointed of their wicked purpoſe reſpecting Paul, when he was ſent to Rome, were the more exaſperated againſt the other chriſtians, and eſpecially James; and on the death of Feſtus (there being ſome interval between that event and the arrival of Albinus, the next Roman governor) they put him to death in a tumultuous manner. Many of the circumſtances, as related by Hegeſippus, ſeem to be fabulous; but it may be true that, upon his perſiſting in giving his teſtimony to the meſſiahſhip of Jeſus, he was ſentenced to be ſtoned, as a blaſphemer, and that this was put in execution, after firſt throwing him down from ſome part of the temple; and that while he was praying for his perſecu-

* Hiſt. Lib. ii. Cap. 23. p. 77.

tors, he was diſpatched by the blow of a fuller's pole. Joſephus ſays, that this James, and others, were ſentenced to be ſtoned by the ſupreme council of the nation, before the arrival of Albinus, as violaters of the law; but that the more ſober part of the citizens were offended at it, as an illegal proceeding; alſo that Albinus being by their means informed of the proceedings, wrote to the high prieſt, threatening to puniſh him for it*.

Peter, having, as we have ſeen, been at Antioch, had probably preached chiefly in Aſia Minor, eſpecially in the provinces of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Aſia, and Bythinia, becauſe his firſt epiſtle is directed to the chriſtians in thoſe places. It ſeems to have been written not long after Paul was releaſed from Rome; and as it contains ſalutations from the church at Babylon, where at that time there were many Jews, ſome of whom, no doubt, were chriſtians, it is probable that he wrote from this place; though he might afterwards go to Rome, and there write his ſecond epiſtle, as, according to tradition, he ſuffered martyrdom there. It is alſo ſaid that the wife of Peter ſuffered at the ſame time, and that when he ſaw her going to

* Ant. Lib. xx. Cap. 8. p. 896.

execution

execution, he rejoiced that God had called her to ſo glorious a death *. Some ſay that Peter, not thinking himſelf worthy to ſuffer in the ſame manner as his maſter had done, was, at his own requeſt, crucified with his head downwards.

The object of Peter's firſt epiſtle is to exhort the chriſtians to whom he wrote, to perſevere in the profeſſion of the goſpel, notwithſtanding the difficulties under which they then laboured. With this view he repreſents to them, in a very ſtrong light, the honour and advantage they derived from the knowledge of the goſpel; and, having enlarged on this, he exhorts them to adorn their profeſſion of it by the obſervance of the moral duties of life, which he particularly enumerates.

The ſecond epiſtle of Peter is a ſupplement to the former, and in this he warns chriſtians more particularly of their danger from thoſe who corrupted the goſpel, and whoſe practices were, as was generally believed, as licentious as their principles; alluding, no doubt, to the Gnoſtic teachers of that age. He alſo exhorts to vigilance, and conſtancy in the diſcharge of our duty, from the conſideration of the diſſolution of the world, and the coming

* Euſeb. Hiſt. Lib. iii. Cap. 30. p. 124.

of

of Chriſt to judgment. In theſe two epiſtles of Peter many attentive readers have obſerved that, without much regularity of compoſition, or clearneſs of expreſſion, there is a peculiar dignity and energy, exceeding any thing in the writings of Paul, and worthy of the prince of the apoſtles.

Though much of what is related by Euſebius * concerning the meeting of Peter and Simon Magus at Rome, be unqueſtionably fabulous, and the Clementine Homilies are evidently a romance, it is not improbable but that ſome well known intercourſe between them might give occaſion to both. As Simon probably abandoned the profeſſion of chriſtianity, and diſtinguiſhed himſelf by travelling into diſtant countries, teaching his principles wherever he came, he might well meet with Peter, and they might have ſeveral diſputations; Simon confiding in his eloquence and addreſs, and Peter, though deſtitute of thoſe advantages, yet poſſeſſing others of a ſuperior nature, not likely to decline an interview with him.

The epiſtle of Jude was probably written upon the ſame occaſion, and about the ſame time, with the laſt of Peter; being evidently

* Hiſt. Lib. ii. Cap. 14. p. 63.

intended

intended to guard chriſtians againſt the principles and practices of the Gnoſtics. We know very little elſe concerning this apoſtle, who is otherwiſe called Lebbeus, and Thaddeus, the brother of James, the ſon of Alpheus, probably the ſame with Cleophas, and together with him called the brother of our Lord. Where this apoſtle lived, or how he died, we are not informed; but probably he continued in ſome part of Judea till the breaking out of the war.

The apoſtle Philip is ſaid to have lived chiefly at Hierapolis; and Papias, one of the firſt biſhops of that place, ſays, that a perſon was raiſed to life by him. The ſame writer ſays that Juſtus, ſurnamed Barſabas, who was thought by the apoſtles to be a proper perſon to ſucceed Judas Iſcariot, as well as Matthias on whom the lot fell, having drank poiſon, received no injury from it*.

Bartholomew, who was probably the ſame with Nathaniel, appears to have preached in India. For there, according to Euſebius †, Pantenus found a Hebrew goſpel of Matthew, which had been left by him, and alſo many chriſtians, who may be ſuppoſed to have been the deſcendants of his converts.

* Euſeb. Hiſt. Lib. iii. Cap. 39. p. 137.
† Lib. v. Cap. 10. p. 223.

As the epiſtles of John, and alſo the book of Revelation, were probably written after the deſtruction of Jeruſalem, I ſhall not ſpeak of them in this place; but it is probable that his Goſpel, as well as the three others, were written about the time that Peter and Jude wrote their epiſtles, viz. on the approach of the Jewiſh war; when the general diſperſion of the diſciples was foreſeen, and it was evident that the apoſtles could not continue long upon the ſtage.

It is generally thought that the goſpel of Matthew was written firſt; but as it is pretty evident that neither Mark nor Luke had ſeen it, it could not have been publiſhed long before they wrote. This goſpel was probably written in Hebrew; but as the two firſt chapters, which contain the account of the miraculous conception of Jeſus, were not in the Ebionite copies of this goſpel, I take it for granted they were not written by Matthew, but were prefixed to his goſpel afterwards. As the learned Symmachus, in his commentary on this goſpel*, endeavoured to diſprove the ſtory of the miraculous conception, it could not have been thought by him to have been a part of the authentic copy.

* Euſeb. Hiſt. Lib. vi. Cap. 17. p. 278.

Mark,

Mark, the ſon of Barnabas's ſiſter, and his companion as well as Paul's, is ſaid to have been, in the latter part of his life, the companion of Peter, and to have written his goſpel under the inſpection, and with the approbation of that apoſtle*. Mark is alſo ſaid to have ended his days at Alexandria, in Egypt†.

Luke is ſaid to have been a phyſician at Antioch, and together with Mark and Barnabas, to have been one of the ſeventy diſciples‡. He evidently wrote the book of Acts after Paul's acquital at Rome, and his goſpel ſome time before.

John is ſaid to have written his goſpel at the requeſt of the church of Epheſus, after the publication of the other three, to ſupply their defects. It alſo appears to have been a principal object with him, in his goſpel, as well as in his epiſtles, to obviate the cavils of the Gnoſtics, ſhewing that Jeſus had real fleſh and blood, like other men, and that *the Chriſt* was not a perſon diſtinct from him, but that Jeſus himſelf was the Chriſt, the Son of God.

* Euſeb. Hiſt. Lib. ii. Cap. 15. p. 64.
† Ib. Lib. ii. Cap. 16. p. 65.
‡ Ib. Lib. iii. Cap. 4. p. 91.

What

What became of the apoſtles whoſe names have not yet been mentioned is now unknown, except that Thomas is ſaid to have preached in Parthia, and Andrew in Scythia, but with what ſucceſs is not ſaid *.

SECTION IX.

Of the Perſecution under Nero.

TILL the reign of Nero, the Roman emperors had done nothing that was hoſtile to chriſtianity, having probably conſidered the chriſtians as a ſect of the Jews, with whoſe cuſtoms they were well acquainted, and whom they had always tolerated, in all the provinces of the empire. But the enmity which the Jews bore them would in time ſhew that they were a diſtinct body of men, and proſelytes made by the Jews were few compared with thoſe that were made by chriſtians. Their converts were ſo numerous, that by this time it began to be apprehended that there might be ſome danger of the rites of the heathen religion being diſcontinued,

* Euſ. Lib. iii. Cap. 1. p. 87.

tinued, and upon the obſervance of theſe it was imagined that the welfare of the ſtate depended. The zealous heathens, therefore, muſt have looked with an evil eye upon the chriſtian miſſionaries, independently of the many, who, like Demetrius of Epheſus, were perſonally intereſted in the ſupport of the ancient worſhip. Beſides, the chriſtians, teaching a new religion, which was hoſtile to all others, and aimed at nothing leſs than the utter ſubverſion of the worſhip that had hitherto been paid to the heathen gods, were in common language ſaid to be guilty of the ſame *impiety* with which others who had at any time neglected the worſhip of the gods had been charged; and with the guilt of impiety was connected the idea of many horrid crimes. On this account the chriſtians being conſidered as *prophane* and *impious* people, by thoſe who did not trouble themſelves to make any enquiry into their principles and conduct, when it ſuited Nero's purpoſe to perſecute the chriſtians, great numbers were well prepared to ſecond his views, and to make very light of any ſufferings to which they could be expoſed.

We have no diſtinct account of this perſecution of Nero by any chriſtian writer who lived

lived at or near the time; but it appears from the accounts of Tacitus and Suetonius, that when this emperor had wantonly ſet fire to the city of Rome, taking advantage of the general odium under which the chriſtians then lay, he gave out that it was done by them; and though no credit was given to the accuſation, yet on that pretence he exerciſed upon them, with the concurrence of the people, the moſt ſhocking barbarities. They were impriſoned and tortured. Some were crucified, and others were impaled, being held in an upright poſition by ſtakes thruſt through their jaws; and ſome were thrown to the wild beaſts. But what was particularly inſulting and cruel, great numbers of them, wrapped in garments dipped in pitch, and other combuſtibles, were faſtened to poſts, and fire was put to them, that they might give light to the city, and expire in this moſt excruciating torture. Nero is ſaid to have illuminated his own gardens in this ſhocking manner, and by this light to have amuſed himſelf in driving his chariot. In this perſecution the tender ſex was not ſpared, and notwithſtanding the general odium under which the chriſtians then lay, theſe cruelties excited the compaſſion of many, who could not but perceive

that theſe ſacrifices were made to gratify the cruelty and caprice of one man, and not for any purpoſe of public utility *.

In what manner the order was given for this perſecution we are not told, but it was probably by a decree of the ſenate, which always exerciſed the power of checking foreign religions, it being thought to be their province in this, as well as in every other method, to take care of the ſtate. And if this perſecution was authorized by a decree of the ſenate, it probably extended to all parts of the Roman empire; and, not being repealed, would be a ſtanding rule for the proceedings of the governors of provinces, though they would, no doubt, execute the law with more or leſs rigour, according to their own diſpoſitions. The perſecution of chriſtians, therefore, being once begun in this manner, would be continued in all future time, without any new law.

That this perſecution of Nero did extend to the remote provinces is expreſſly aſſerted by Oroſius †, and is alſo evident from an inſcription found in Spain in honour of Nero,

* Tacit An. Lib. xv. S. 44. Sueton. Nero, S. 16.

† Primus Romæ chriſtianos ſuppliciis et mortibus adfecit, ac per omnes provincias pari perſecutione excruciari imperavit. Lib. vii. Cap. 7. p. 473. Ed Havercamp.

for

for clearing the province of robbers, and of thoſe who taught mankind a new ſuperſtition. For in this manner were the chriſtians at that time uſually characterized by the heathens *.

Conſidering the great number of chriſtians who muſt have periſhed at Rome only in this perſecution (Tacitus ſaying they were a great multitude, *ingens multitudo*) and that, in the moſt violent perſecutions, they who ſuffer are few in compariſon of thoſe who, by ſome means or other, eſcape; this hiſtory affords an indiſputable proof of the great progreſs that chriſtianity had made in the age of the apoſtles. Indeed, to have incurred the general hatred that Tacitus mentions, which implies that they had drawn a great degree of attention upon them, they muſt have been very numerous; and Nero muſt have been ſenſible of it, or he could never have thought of taking advantage of the circumſtance in order to ſcreen himſelf from public reſentment. And there can be no doubt, but that there were at that time many more chriſtians in Antioch, Epheſus, and other great cities, in the eaſtern provinces, than in Rome, where it is not probable that any apoſtle had preach-

* See an account of this in Lardner's Heathen Teſtimonies, Chap. 3. Works, Vol. VII. p. 248.

ed before Paul, and he not more than two years; though a foundation had been laid, and a chriſtian church had been eſtabliſhed there before his arrival.

SECTION X.

Of the Calamities of the Jews, and of the Deſtruction of Jeruſalem and the Temple.

IT was in the reign of Nero that the war broke out between the Jews and the Romans, in the courſe of which the former ſuffered more than any other people are known to have done in the ſame ſpace of time. In theſe events our Saviour's prophecies concerning the calamities of the nation, and particularly concerning the deſtruction of the city of Jeruſalem, and of the temple, were exactly fulfilled; and the verification of this prediction is the more remarkable, as the events are recorded not by a chriſtian, but by a Jewiſh hiſtorian (Joſephus) whoſe account is confirmed by the writings of ſeveral heathens.

The

The Jews had always very ill brooked their ſubjection to the Romans; and when the firſt attempt was made to take the cenſus among them, by Quirinus, governor of Syria, A.D. 9, there was a conſiderable revolt, headed by Judas of Galilee; and though he and his party were ſoon ſuppreſſed, their principles had taken deep root in the country; and whenever the Roman governors acted in an arbitrary and oppreſſive manner, as they often did, the people always ſhewed a diſpoſition to rebel. What made the cauſe of the revolters more popular, was the connexion which their principles of civil liberty was ſuppoſed to have with thoſe of their religion, which gave them a high idea of the dignity of their nation, as the peculiar people of God. They ought, it was ſaid, to have no other maſter but him, who was not only the ſole object of their worſhip, but their proper civil governor alſo, the only lawful head of their nation.

That there were perſons who had this idea, is evident from ſome of them putting this queſtion to our Saviour, *Is it lawful to give tribute to Cæſar, or not?* And that this party was then numerous, and had great influence in public affairs, is evident from his prudent

anſwer*, *Give unto Cæſar the things that are Cæſar's, and unto God the things that are God's*, not chuſing to give them any handle againſt him.

The ſame ſpirit of liberty and independence, joined to the contempt which the Jews entertained for other nations, made them generally hated by the populace wherever they were ſettled; though it is evident that many perſons of reflection reſpected them on account of their religion, which appeared at firſt ſight to be much more rational than any that prevailed in other countries; and it pleaſed divine providence that moſt people ſhould have an opportunity of forming a judgment in the caſe. It is remarkable that there was no city of any conſequence, in all the eaſtern part of the world, in which there was not, in very early times, a conſiderable number of Jews. It appears from the book of Eſther, that the Jews were then ſettled in all the provinces of the Perſian empire, but few of them having returned to Judea after the Babyloniſh captivity, and being favoured by Cyrus and the ſucceeding kings of Perſia. They had no leſs favour ſhewn them by Alexander the Great, whoſe part they had taken,

* Matt. xxii. 21.

and in general by his ſucceſſors, both in Syria and Egypt, eſpecially in the latter, where they were a great proportion of the inhabitants of Alexandria. Under the Maccabees they had a league with the Romans, and though the Roman emperors afterwards took the government of the country into their own hands, they did not diminiſh their privileges in any other part of the empire.

It was in Egypt, which at this time is ſuppoſed to have contained not leſs than a million of Jews, that the hatred of the other inhabitants firſt ſhewed itſelf in any open acts of violence. Agrippa, the ſon of Ariſtobulus, and grandſon of Herod the Great, being appointed king of Judea by Caligula, and going through Egypt, was inſulted in Alexandria by a mock proceſſion, in ridicule of him and his kingdom; and the populace being favoured by the governor Flaccus, would place a ſtatue of the emperor (who had inſiſted upon being worſhipped as a God) in the Jewiſh ſynagogues. In this tumult many ſynagogues of the Jews were demoliſhed and burned.

The Jews were then deprived, by order of the governor, of their privilege of citizens, and confined to a ſmall quarter of the town; in

conſe-

conſequence of which the houſes and ſhops, which they had been obliged to abandon, were plundered, and in the progreſs of the tumult many of the Jews were burned alive, and dragged through the ſtreets. The account of theſe cruelties greatly amuſed the brutal emperor; and when an embaſſy was ſent to him from the Jews of Alexandria, with the celebrated Philo at their head, he behaved to them with a ſtudied neglect and contempt, on finding that they perſiſted in refuſing to acknowledge his divinity; and it was with great difficulty that Agrippa himſelf, who had returned to Rome, had been able to ſoften his reſentment againſt the whole Jewiſh nation; and the effect of his interpoſition was not laſting. It is probable that his death only ſaved them from his utmoſt vengeance. Claudius, however, reverſed what Caligula had done, and reſtored the Jews of Alexandria to their former privileges.

About the ſame time the Greeks and Syrians in conjunction deſtroyed more than fifty thouſand Jews, in Seleucia and its neighbourhood, occaſioned originally by a Jewiſh governor of the province, having rendered himſelf odious to the inhabitants.

The diſturbances in Judea itſelf, began under the adminiſtration of Cumanus, A. D. 49. by a Roman Soldier, at the feaſt of paſſover, ſhewing, by a very indecent attitude, his contempt of the Jews, and their religion. This provoked the populace to revenge themſelves by throwing ſtones, and inſulting the governor. But when he ſent for the troops that were ſtationed in the town, the people, not being prepared to encounter them, fled; and in the confuſion preſſed upon one another in ſuch a manner, that twenty thouſand of them are ſaid to have periſhed on this occaſion.

Under the government of this Cumanus, the Samaritans inſulted the Galileans in their paſſage through their country to Jeruſalem, on one of their public feſtivals; and on this occaſion many of the Jews were killed, eſpecially as the governor took the part of the Samaritans. However, at the interceſſion of Agrippa, juſtice was done to the Jews at this time, and Cumanus was ſent into baniſhment. Then it was that Felix was made governor of the country.

Under the adminiſtration of Felix, A. D. 53, there appeared a Jewiſh impoſtor from Egypt, who, being followed by a multitude of people, advanced as far as the mount of olives;

olives; he promiſing that they would ſee the walls of the city fall down before them. Felix, however, marched out againſt them, and preſently diſperſed them, killing about four hundred, and taking two hundred of them priſoners; but their leader made his eſcape. It was this Egyptian that Lyſias ſuppoſed Paul to have been. About the ſame time other impoſtors appeared in the wilderneſs, or the mountainous and leſs populous parts of the country, deceiving the people by their magnificent promiſes; but they were ſoon ſuppreſſed, and great numbers of them were crucified.

Felix, having been guilty of many exceſſes, was frequently admoniſhed by Jonathan the high-prieſt; till at length, provoked at his freedom, he got him to be aſſaſſinated by ſome of the robbers, with whom the country at that time ſwarmed, and who from carrying about them ſhort daggers (in Latin *ſica*) were by the Romans called *ſicarii*. The character of theſe men was a ſtrange mixture of barbarity and religion. They ſhewed great zeal for the law and the temple; and exclaiming every where againſt the Roman government, and being men of deſperate fortunes, they were perpetually urging the people to revolt.

Feſtus,

Feſtus, who ſuceeded Felix, A. D. 56; found the country full of theſe banditti, and, like Felix, he alſo ſuppreſſed an inſurrection headed by an impoſtor, who had drawn after him a great number into the wilderneſs by vain promiſes of deliverance from their ſervitude. Thus was our Saviour's prediction concerning falſe chriſts and falſe prophets* remarkably verified.

The farther and more ſerious calamities of the Jews were preceded by a very extraordinary circumſtance, though perhaps not of a miraculous nature. One Jeſus, the ſon of Ananus, coming from the country, began to cry in the temple, "A voice from the eaſt, "a voice from the weſt, a voice from the four "winds, a voice againſt Jeruſalem, and "againſt the temple, &c." Whatever was ſaid or done to this man, he continued to baul out in this manner, with little variation. When he was cruelly ſcourged by order of Albinus the governor, he kept crying, as if he had felt nothing for himſelf, "Woe to Jeru-"ſalem," &c. This he continued to practice with little interruption during the ſpace of ſeven years and five months. When the city was beſieged, he kept repeating his lament-

* Matt. xxiv. 11.

able

able prognoſtic, "Woe to Jeruſalem, woe to "to the temple, woe to the people;" and, laſtly, what he was not obſerved ever to have ſaid before, "Woe to myſelf;" when immediately a ſtone from one of the Roman engines daſhed him to pieces*.

Other things called *prodigies* are ſaid to have happened previous to the war, moſt of them probably imaginary, or fabulous. Among others it is ſaid that the eaſtern gate of the temple, which was of braſs, and ſo heavy that twenty men could barely move it, opened of itſelf in the night; and that at the feaſt of Pentecoſt, while the prieſts were performing their functions, they firſt heard a ruſhing noiſe, and then a diſtinct voice, ſaying, "Let "us go hence†."

The year after this, viz. A. D. 66, the government of Florus being inſupportable, and the Jews obtaining no redreſs by their application to Ceſtius Gallus the governor of Syria (to which Judea was a ſubordinate province) broke out into open rebellion. Agrippa did every thing in his power to diſſuade them from ſo fatal a reſolution; but making no impreſſion upon them, he thought proper to quit Jeruſalem. The firſt effect of their un-

* Joſephus de Bello Jud. Lib. vii. Cap. 12. † Ibid.

bridled reſentment was ſeizing the fortreſs of Maſſada, and killing all the Romans they found there. After this Eleazar, a headſtrong young man, ſon of the high-prieſt Ananus, and captain of the temple, perſuaded the people not to receive the uſual offerings in the name of the emperor. They then attacked the fortreſs of Antonia, which was near the temple; and when they had taken it, they put to death all the Romans they found in it. The chief actor in this ſcene of butchery was Menahem, the ſon of Judas of Galilee, mentioned above.

About the ſame time that theſe things were tranſacting at Jeruſalem, there was an inſurrection of the inhabitants of Cæſarea againſt the Jews of that place; and Florus taking an active part againſt the Jews, more than twenty thouſand of them were killed, and the reſt enſlaved. This maſſacre at Cæſarea ſo provoked the Jews, that, with great rage, they roſe in arms in all parts of the country, and attacking every place in which there were any Romans, they made great deſtruction among them, burning ſeveral towns, and killing many people. But theſe barbarities were ſeverely retorted by the Syrians, and other inhabitants, againſt the Jews, who were not provided

provided for any regular attack or defence of any place, ſo that the whole country was full of ſlaughter and confuſion. At Scythopolis more than thirteen thouſand Jews were killed; at Aſcalon and Ptolemais two thouſand in each, with many at Tyre. At Alexandria, where they had ſuffered ſo much before, more than fifty thouſand were now ſlain. All this, however was, only *the beginning of ſorrows* to this devoted nation.

Ceſtius Gallus, ſeeing the Jews every where in arms, thought it high time for him to interpoſe, and endeavour to quell the revolt. He therefore took one legion with his auxiliaries, and being conducted by Agrippa, he came firſt to Joppa, which he took, and burned, killing all the Jews in it, to the number of eight thouſand and four hundred, whilſt his Lieutenant Gallus, in Galilee, killed more than two thouſand. But Ceſtius advancing to Jeruſalem at the feaſt of tabernacles, the inhabitants marched out againſt him in ſuch numbers, that though they fought with little or no diſcipline, they gained a conſiderable advantage over him, killing five hundred and fifteen of his men, with very little loſs on their ſide.

Without being diſcouraged by this repulſe, Ceſtius advanced to the city; and took poſſeſſion of what was called Bezetha, or the new town, which was but ſlightly fortified; and it was not doubted by Joſephus, but that, if he had puſhed the aſſault, he might at that time have made himſelf maſter of the place; but without any apparent reaſon he retired, and the Jews purſuing him to Antipatris, killed five thouſand three hundred of his infantry, and nine hundred and eighty of his cavalry. They alſo took his baggage, and his military engines, of which they made great uſe in the defence of the city afterwards. This action happened on the eighth of November in the tenth year of Nero, A.D. 66. and the advantage which the Jews gained in it greatly encouraged them to perſiſt in the war, notwithſtanding the dreadful loſſes they ſuſtained on all other occaſions*. At Damaſcus, about this time, ten thouſand of them were deſtroyed by the other inhabitants.

At Jeruſalem, the Jews finding themſelves engaged in a ſerious war, began to proceed with ſome more regularity, and appointed three commanders in chief, Joſeph the ſon of Gorion, Ananus the ſon of another Gorion,

* Joſephus de Bello Jud. Lib. ii. Cap. 24.

 who

who had been high-prieſt, and Joſeph the hiſtorian, who had the command in Galilee. At Jeruſalem, Ananus had much trouble with the ſeditious Sicarii, and endeavoured to apprehend Simon the ſon of Gioras, who was at the head of a great party of them, plundering the country, but he eſcaped to Maſſada.

At the breaking out of this war, Nero was in Achaia, and being diſſatisfied with the conduct of Ceſtius, he gave the command to Veſpaſian, who ſent his ſon Titus to Alexandria, to bring ſome legions which were ſtationed there, while he advanced to Syria. This was the ſituation of things at the end of the year 66.

At the beginning of the next year, Titus joined his father at Ptolemais, and then the whole Roman army, including auxiliaries, amounted to ſixty thouſand. The only conſiderable reſiſtance that Veſpaſian met with was at Jotapata, where Joſephus commanded; but after forty days the place was taken and deſtroyed, and Joſephus, who had eſcaped, ſoon after ſurrendered to the Romans. In the courſe of this year Veſpaſian and his ſon made themſelves maſters of all Galilee, ſelling the inhabitants for ſlaves. But John the ſon of Levi who commanded the ſeditious Sicarii in that

that part of the country, and who had been very troubleſome to Joſephus, made his eſcape to Jeruſalem.

At this time many of the elderly people were for peace, but they were not able to reſtrain the violence of the reſt; and the Sicarii getting into the city, maſſacred without mercy whom they pleaſed, in order to poſſeſs themſelves of their wealth, eſpecially on the pretence of their being for peace with the Romans, and forming deſigns to deliver up the city. John, who at firſt had taken part with Ananus, who commanded in the town, ſoon joined theſe Sicarii, and kept poſſeſſion of the temple againſt him. Not finding himſelf ſtrong enough, they got twenty thouſand Idumeans introduced into the town; and then breaking out upon the inhabitants, they killed the next day eight thouſand five hundred perſons, and among the reſt Ananus himſelf. The havock they made in the city was ſo great, that twelve thouſand perſons were left by them unburied. At length the Idumeans were ſhocked with the conduct of their aſſociates, and left the city.

While the Jews at Jeruſalem were thus madly employed in deſtroying one another, Veſpaſian, perceiving how much this was to

 his

his advantage, refrained from making any attempt upon the place, but poſſeſſed himſelf of all the country, except the caſtle of Macheron. On the death of Nero, the troops of Veſpaſian ſaluted him emperor, and the command of the army devolved upon his ſon Titus.

It was in the interval between the retreat of Ceſtius, and the approach of Titus, that the chriſtians, in the city and country, warned by the prophecies of our Saviour, and, as Euſebius moreover ſays *, by perſons divinely inſpired, all fled into the dominions of Agrippa, beyond the ſea of Galilee, reſiding chiefly in the city of Pella, and its neighbourhood. There they continued ſeveral centuries, though gradually diminiſhing in numbers, till at length they became extinct. Many of them, however, returned after the war, and continued at Jeruſalem till the time of Adrian.

Before the approach of Titus, the Jews had been far from making any advantage of the abſence of their enemies. On the contrary, they had been doing themſelves infinite miſchief by their diviſions, ſo that at his approach there were three hoſtile factions in the place. The interior part of the temple was

* Lib. iii. Cap. 5. p. 93.

held

held by Eleazar, whoſe partiſans were not numerous, but they were the beſt fortified. John was in the outer part of the temple, and Simon the ſon of Gioras commanded in the town at large. This Simon had been ravaging the country, and had been let into the city by the people to oppoſe John, whoſe followers were guilty of the greateſt exceſſes, and who, it was feared, would even ſet fire to the city

In the daily ſtruggle between theſe factions all the ſtores of proviſions in the place, which might have ſufficed for a long ſiege, were wantonly deſtroyed; and the temple itſelf was often full of blood and dead bodies. At length Eleazar, admitting the followers of John to worſhip in the temple, was overpowered and ſlain by ſome of them who had arms concealed under their garments, ſo that all the Sicarii were then under John, whoſe armed followers were eight thouſand and four hundred, while thoſe of Simon, who held the city, were ten thouſand beſides five thouſand Idumeans. Theſe parties, though ſo hoſtile to each other, always united againſt the Romans.

Titus brought with him four legions beſides auxiliary troops, and arrived a ſhort

 time

[illegible]

[illegible]

time before the paſſover, ſo that the city was full of people, who ſoon conſumed what proviſions were in it; and the conſequence of this was extreme famine, and its conſtant attendant peſtilence. On the paſſover preceding, an eſtimate had been made of the people who reſorted to Jeruſalem, by counting the number of lambs that were killed for the purpoſe; from which it was computed that they did not amount to leſs than two millions five hundred and fifty-ſix thouſand; but it cannot be ſuppoſed that the city contained half this number when it was actually beſieged, eſpecially as the arrival of Titus was a little before the paſſover. For though great numbers would crowd in, regardleſs of all conſequences, many, no doubt, would be deterred from entering in thoſe circumſtances.

The greateſt part of the diſtreſs of the Jews in this moſt memorable ſiege aroſe not from their enemies, but from themſelves. Titus having ſoon made himſelf maſter of every thing to the north of the tower of Antonia, which was not far from the temple, endeavoured by all gentle methods to bring the inhabitants to terms, and gave leave to all who choſe it to leave the place, but this was prevented by the leaders of the factions. Joſephus

ſephus alſo, by order of Titus, addreſſed the people in a long and affectionate ſpeech, but this alſo produced no effect. What the people ſuffered from the attacks of the Romans was very inconſiderable, notwithſtanding they employed all their uſual methods of aſſault, ſuch as battering rams, baliſtæ, and the like; but the dreadful effects of famine were ſoon felt in the extreme. A woman of ſome rank, and in good circumſtances, was found eating her own child, a thing to which the Jews would have much greater averſion than any other people. Thouſands would, no doubt, chuſe to lanquiſh and die, rather than have recourſe to ſo horrible a method of prolonging their lives; and yet this cannot be ſuppoſed to have been the only inſtance of the kind.

The followers of John and Simon were guilty of the moſt ſhocking cruelties in order to ſecure proviſions for themſelves, torturing and putting to death without mercy; and yet, notwithſtanding this reſource, the men in arms were obliged to go without the walls to ſearch for whatever they could find that was eatable. Theſe Titus, when he could ſeize them, crucified, ſometimes five hundred in a day, ſo that at length they could not find wood for croſſes, or room to erect them. Some

of them Titus ſent back with their hands cut off, and otherwiſe maimed; but this had no effect whatever on thoſe within the city.

Titus, perceiving that all his attempts to reduce the place by force were in vain, ſuch was the ſtrength of the walls, and the deſperate courage of thoſe who defended them, and knowing that the famine would in time do the buſineſs for him, at length endeavoured to quicken the effects of it by making a wall of *circumvallation*, as it was termed, quite round the place; and thereby prevented any from going into, or coming out of it. This occaſioned a dreadful increaſe of the mortality within the city; ſo that the living not being able to bury the dead, contented themſelves with throwing them over the walls. Titus, ſeeing the ditch full of dead bodies, was ſo much affected with it, that it is ſaid, he lifted up his hands to heaven, and called God to witneſs, that this was not owing to him.

Notwithſtanding the care that was taken to prevent any perſons from eſcaping to the the enemy, before the building of the wall of circumvallation, many did get out, and the humanity of the Romans received them; but ſome of them being obſerved to examine their excrements, in order to pick out of them the

money,

money, jewels, &c. which (having no other method of concealing) they had ſwallowed, the Arabians and Syrians in the army privately killed great numbers of them, in hopes of finding treaſure. In one night two thouſand were found diſpatched for this purpoſe; and though Titus, on diſcovering it, threatened to puniſh ſuch enormities with death, it did not prevent many murders being ſtill committed with this view.

While the poor were carried out at the gates, to be buried at the public expence, a deſerter told Titus, that at one of the gates where he was ſtationed, there were carried out one hundred and fifteen thouſand eight hundred and eighty, between the fourteenth of April, when the ſiege commenced, and the firſt of July. Another ſaid that they had carried out at all the gates ſix hundred thouſand, and that then, being unable to carry them all out, they had filled whole houſes with them, and ſhut them up.

On the ſeventeenth of July, Titus took the citadel of Antonia, and conſequently approached the temple; and at that time the daily ſacrifice was diſcontinued for want of victims. On the eighth of Auguſt the Romans, not being able to make any impreſſion

upon

upon the ſecond incloſure of the temple, ſet fire to the gates, which ſoon extended itſelf to the galleries, and continued to rage the remainder of that day and the following night, ſo that they were now in poſſeſſion of the outward court, in which was the altar of burnt-offering. Titus would ſtill have ſaved the body of the temple, conſiſting of the holy and moſt holy places; but a ſoldier ſetting fire to a building that was contiguous to it, this alſo took fire, and notwithſtanding the endeavours of Titus to prevent it, was burned to the ground. This was on the tenth of the month Ab, the fifth month of the paſſover in Niſan, and as Joſephus ſays, on the ſame day of the year on which it had been burned in the time of Nebuchadnezzar*.

There periſhed in and about the temple ſix thouſand men, women, and children, deceived by a prophecy, which promiſed them ſome extraordinary appearance in their favour. There were ſeveral of theſe falſe prophets, who perpetually deceived the people, and prevented many from going over to the Romans.

Titus was now completely maſter of the place, and as ſoon as poſſible he put an end to

* De Bello Judaico, Lib. vii. Cap. 10.

the ſlaughter; John and Simon, who had ſurrendered, being reſerved to grace his triumph. It was ſuppoſed that one million one hundred and ten thouſand people periſhed in this ſiege, and ninety-ſeven thouſand were expoſed to ſale, but at length they could find no purchaſers.

On the birth-day of his brother Domitian, more than two thouſand five hundred Jews were maſſacred, ſome by fire, ſome by wild beaſts, and others as gladiators. A great number alſo were deſtroyed at ſome games which Titus exhibited at Berytus, on the celebration of his father's acceſſion to the empire. At his own triumph, John and Simon, with ſeven hundred Jews, were led in proceſſion, after which Simon was put to death, and probably John alſo. In this triumph the golden candleſtick with ſeven branches, the ſame probably which had been carried to Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar, and reſtored by Cyrus, with other holy veſſels, were publicly exhibited; and the figures of them may ſtill be perceived on the triumphal arch which was erected on this occaſion at Rome.

The entire conqueſt of the country was completed by Titus's lieutenants; the laſt place that held out being the fortreſs of Maſſada,

ſada, which was deemed to be impregnable. There Eleazar, the grandſon of Judas of Galilee, commanded; but ſeeing no means of eſcape, he adviſed his followers to die by their own hands, rather than ſurrender to the Romans. This advice they took; and having firſt killed their wives and children, they diſpatched one another, to the number of ſix hundred and ninety. This was the fifteenth of April, A.D. 73, ſeven years after the commencement of the war*.

After the reduction of Judea, the Sicarii ſtill created diſturbances in Egypt and Cyrene, where one Jonathan induced many to follow him into the deſert, by the promiſe of performing miracles; but he was ſoon overpowered by the governor of the province, carried to Rome, and burned alive. Three thouſand were maſſacred on this occaſion, and it is computed that there periſhed in the whole of this fatal war one million three hundred and thirty-ſeven thouſand four hundred and ninety, beſides many of whom no account could be collected.

Such was the dreadful iſſue of this war, terminating in the utter downfal of the Jewiſh ſtate and nation, from which it has never re-

* De Bello Judaico, Lib. vii. Cap. 28.

covered to this day, involving in it the deſtruction of the temple and the diſcontinuance of the ſervices annexed to it. The deſolation of the country itſelf went on increaſing, till, from being, for it's ſize, one of the moſt fertile and populous countries in the world, it is now the moſt barren and deſolate, fifty thouſand being the lateſt computation of the number of all its inhabitants*.

All theſe calamities were, no doubt, accompliſhed by natural cauſes, and therefore ſuch as might have been expected from a thorough knowledge of the temper of the inhabitants, their refractory diſpoſition towards the Romans, their factions among themſelves, and their abſurd confidence in ſupernatural aſſiſtance, joined to a knowledge of their real weakneſs, compared with the overbearing power of the Roman empire. But who beſides the Supreme Being could have foreſeen all theſe circumſtances, or have known that the operation of them would have led to this preciſe cataſtrophe, when the rebellion might have terminated in many other ways, and not in ſuch a total ruin of the coun-

* This is the computation of Villani, but travellers with whom I have converſed, and on whom I can depend, ſay that they muſt be more than twice that number.

try, and diſperſion of its inhabitants. The divine foreſight is therefore conſpicuous in our Saviour's clear prediction of theſe events, with all their capital circumſtances, which every reader of this narrative muſt perceive, when it does not appear that any other perſon had the leaſt apprehenſion of ſuch a thing. The Jews now ſay, that our Saviour found all this that he foretold in the prophecies of Daniel; but why did not their own ſcribes, the profeſſed interpreters of the law and the prophets, and the leading men of their own nation, diſcover the ſame in that book?

The juſtice and wiſdom of the Supreme Being are equally conſpicuous in this great event. A particular providence had ever attended that people. They had always flouriſhed while they were obedient to God and his prophets, and calamity of ſome kind or other had been the never-failing conſequence of their diſobedience; and never had the nation in general ſhewn a more perverſe and obſtinate diſpoſition towards any prophets, than they did with reſpect to Chriſt and the apoſtles, though no prophets had ever been ſent to them with more evident marks of a divine miſſion. Their inveteracy to chriſtianity continues to this day, and ſo does their diſperſion,

 though

though they are ſtill a diſtinct people, and never mix, ſo as to be confounded, with any of the nations among whom they are ſettled. But we may hope that the time is approaching when their unbelief in chriſtianity and their calamities will both ceaſe. A better diſpoſition is already in ſome meaſure apparent in them, and the treatment they meet with from other nations is alſo better than it has been. May God haſten the time when this his favoured people ſhall, by their repentance and converſion to chriſtianity, recover the place they formerly had in his favour, and in conſequence of it be reſtored to their country, and be to the end of the world what prophecy aſſures us they will be, the moſt diſtinguiſhed nation upon earth.

We may naturally lament this inveterate obſtinacy in the great body of the Jews, and their rancorous oppoſition to chriſtianity, at the promulgation of it; but we may eaſily perceive that it was calculated to have the happieſt effect with reſpect to the evidence, and conſequently the moral influence, of chriſtianity, and with that the happineſs of all mankind in future time. It will now be for ever unqueſtioned, that the rulers of the Jewiſh nation, in which chriſtianity roſe, were by no

means

means favourable to it, and that the Jewiſh ſcriptures (the authenticity of which is ſuppoſed by the writers of the new teſtament, and of which they avail themſelves in proving the meſſiahſhip of Jeſus) were no forgeries of theirs. At the ſame time it will be evident, that ſo many thouſands of this obſtinate nation, the moſt attached to their own laws, and ſo averſe to the pretenſions of ſuch a meſſiah as Jeſus was, could never have been brought to admit his claims, and become his diſciples, at the riſque of every thing dear to them in life, and of life itſelf, as was actually the caſe, without the moſt ſatisfactory evidence. This will alſo appear to have been the caſe while the facts were recent, while both the friends and the enemies of chriſtianity had the beſt opportunity, and the ſtrongeſt motives, to examine them with the greateſt rigour.

SECTION XI.

General Obſervations on the Doctrine and Diſcipline of the Chriſtian Church at this Period.

IT is moſt evident, from the book of Acts, the hiſtory of which extends through almoſt the whole of the period, the events of which we have been reviewing, that no doctrine had been advanced by the apoſtles, and firſt preachers of chriſtianity, that gave offence to the Jews, beſides that of Jeſus being the Meſſiah. Had there been any appearance of an infringement of the great doctrine of the *divine unity*, to which the Jews were then, and ſtill continue to be, ſo much attached, by the advancement of any thing approaching to the doctrine that is now received of *the divinity of Chriſt*, it could not but have excited the greateſt outcry imaginable; as it did afterwards, when that doctrine was advanced, and as it continues to do at this very day.

As all the Jews expected that their Meſſiah would be a mere man, the natural deſcendant of David, it is evident that the apoſtles, and other primitive chriſtians, who were

all zealous Jews, muſt have received him as ſuch. It is evident from the Goſpels, and is acknowledged by all chriſtian writers of the four firſt centuries, that the apoſtles conſidered him in no other light during the whole of their intercourſe with him; having no idea of his being God, or the creator of the world under God. It is no leſs evident from the Acts of the apoſtles, and is alſo acknowledged by the ſame early writers, who were themſelves trinitarians, that the apoſtles announced him as ſuch to their nation, and the world, viz. as nothing more than *a man approved of God by ſigns and wonders which God did by him*, and whom God had raiſed from the dead. And that they had any private information of their maſter being of a higher rank in the creation than themſelves, but that they thought it prudent to uſe great reſerve in the communication of this knowledge to others (though ſuch is ſaid to have been their conduct by the ancient trinitarian writers above referred to) is abſolutely incredible.

Whenever any ſuch doctrine as that of Chriſt being of a rank ſuperior to that of man had been divulged, ſince no ſuch perſon had ever been ſent to the Jews before, or had been announced by any of their prophets (as they

themſelves underſtood their writings) to be ſent to them in future, and as they could not conceive that any purpoſe of divine providence could require the interpoſition of ſuch a Being, it muſt have excited the greateſt aſtoniſhment poſſible. The information could not but have been received with great doubt and heſitation by thoſe who might have admitted it, and probably with abſolute unbelief by many other chriſtians. All this, joined to the offence which the divulging of ſuch a doctrine would have given to the Jews, muſt have occaſioned ſuch a diſcuſſion of the queſtion, and ſuch controverſies, and ſchiſms, as we could not but have heard of. The doctrine of the divinity of Chriſt is the objection which every Jew now makes to any attempts to convert him to chriſtianity, and hiſtory ſhews this to have been the caſe from the time that it was generally received by chriſtians. Yet at the firſt preaching of the goſpel, thouſands of the Jews were converted, without ever making ſuch an objection; a plain proof that there was then no foundation for it, by ſuch a doctrine being profeſſed by any chriſtians. There is not the leaſt trace of any controverſy whatever concerning the di-

vinity or pre-exiſtence of Chriſt in all the book of Acts, or in any of the writings of the apoſtles, though they treat at large of ſuch topics as excited the moſt attention for almoſt forty years after the firſt promulgation of chriſtianity.

It is apparent from all theſe writings, that the only topic of diſcuſſion with the unbelieving Jews of that age was the Meſſiahſhip of Jeſus; and among chriſtians, the only articles of debate were the proſelyting of Gentiles to chriſtianity, without ſubjecting them to the law of Moſes, and the notions of the Gnoſtics. Theſe were conſidered as ſubverting the fundamental principles of chriſtianity, becauſe they taught that it was not *Jeſus* that was properly *the Chriſt*, or that he had not fleſh and blood like other men; becauſe they denied the doctrine of the reſurrection, and becauſe their principles gave countenance, as it was thought at leaſt, to great immoralities. Theſe therefore, Paul, Peter, Jude, and John, moſt ſtrenuouſly oppoſed. But with reſpect to the doctrines of the divinity and pre-exiſtence of Chriſt, which have engaged the attention of the chriſtian world from about the middle of the ſecond century to the preſent time,

time, they are abſolutely ſilent, and all that can be pretended is, that they incidentally mention, or allude to them.

It is ſomething remarkable, however, that the moſt ſtrenuous exertions of the apoſtles were not, in either of theſe caſes, crowned with complete ſucceſs. According to Juſtin Martyr, many of the Jewiſh chriſtians were ſo much attached to their peculiar rites, that they could not reconcile themſelves to the Gentile chriſtians, who had not firſt become proſelytes to Judaiſm, and they never had much eſteem for the apoſtle Paul, who had been the great advocate for the liberty of the Gentile churches, and made no uſe of his writings. It can hardly be ſuppoſed, however, that this was the caſe with the majority of the Jewiſh chriſtians, conſidering the high commendation of Paul's epiſtles by Peter, and that in every thing that he did he had the countenance of the other apoſtles.

It is poſſible that ſome expreſſions of Paul, which perhaps were unguarded, might be the reaſon of the diſlike which the zealous Jewiſh chriſtians in general had for him, and of the averſion they had to his writings. They have certainly been much miſunderſtood by chriſtians, who have thence been led to ima-

gine that he conſidered the law of Moſes as aboliſhed by chriſtianity, though his practice, which is certainly the beſt interpreter of his language, ſufficiently proves that he could not have any ſuch meaning. This fact, however, among many others, ſhews that apoſtolical authority was not, in that age, of ſo great account as it was afterwards. The apoſtles were chiefly conſidered as witneſſes of certain important facts, with which they were the beſt acquainted. Particular revelations were alſo made to ſome of them (though theſe were not confined to the apoſtles, as we ſee in the caſe of Agabus) and on theſe accounts they were reſpected as any other prophets would have been; but their *opinions*, and judgments, as we may learn from what paſſed in the council of the apoſtles, and indeed from their taking ſo much pains as they did in their writings to convince other chriſtians of the truth of their opinions, and the propriety of the practices which they recommended, without deciding authoritatively, had no more weight than thoſe of other men.

The Gnoſtics, though they were probably, in a great meaſure, ſilenced by the efforts of the apoſtles, which were certainly exerted to the utmoſt for the purpoſe, ſtill kept their ground,

ground, and many of them had their ſeparate aſſemblies, beſides being mixed with other chriſtians, as we learn from the epiſtles of John, which were written long after thoſe of Paul, Peter, and Jude; ſo that whatever effect theſe could have produced, it muſt by that time have been fully ſeen; and in the age immediately following that of the apoſtles, they made a greater figure than ever they had done before. There was ſomething in their principles ſo exceedingly plauſible, and they were ſo generally received by all perſons who pretended to philoſophy, or more knowledge than the vulgar, that the better educated among the chriſtian converts were generally taken with them.

The *evil* that is in the world could not, in their opinion, have the ſame origin with the *good* that is in it, not being able to conceive how evil, in ſo great an extent, could be ſubſervient to good. So mixed a ſyſtem as this is, they, therefore, thought to be unworthy of infinite wiſdom and goodneſs. As to the doctrine of a ſoul, diſtinct from the body, which had pre-exiſted in an angelic ſtate, and for ſome offence committed in that ſtate had been degraded, and confined to the body, as a puniſhment, it had been the great doctrine

of the eaſtern ſages from time immemorial; and ſo inchanting is the idea, that very few chriſtians in proportion can even now be prevailed upon to part with it, and to believe with Moſes, that man was made *of the duſt of the ground*, or wholly of what is called *matter*, which was afterwards made to breathe and live; and that this *breath*, or *life*, which is common to brute animals as well as men, is the higheſt ſenſe of that word in the ſcriptures which we render *ſoul*.

The Gnoſtics alſo ſuppoſed that, beſides thoſe ſpiritual beings, which became the common ſouls of men, there were intelligences of a higher order, which ſprung more immediately, and by way of direct emanation, from the ſupreme mind (for having no idea of the creation of any thing *out of nothing*, every thing of the nature of *mind* was ſuppoſed to have been derived ultimately from the one ſelf-exiſting mind) and that theſe ſuperior intelligences deſcended occaſionally upon earth, either aſſuming the ſhadowy forms of men, and other things, or entering into men, and acting upon their organs, as demons were ſuppoſed to do in people who were inſane.

Theſe were the fundamental doctrines of the Gnoſtics, and they endeavoured to con-
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nect them with chriſtianity, by ſuppoſing that Jeſus was either himſelf one of thoſe ſuperior intelligences, in the form of man, but without real fleſh and blood, and without being ſubject to the pains and infirmities of human nature; or that there deſcended into the man Jeſus, one of thoſe Beings of a higher order, and that it was this great Being, and not the man *Jeſus*, who was properly the *Chriſt*, and who was appointed by God to act ſo important a part in the affairs of men. The apoſtles they conſidered as judging only by their ſenſes, which were deceived in this caſe; and though they gave entire credit to them with reſpect to every thing which they had ſeen, or heard, of Jeſus, before, and after his reſurrection, they conſidered them as plain unlettered men, who were ignorant of what was not within the ſphere of their ſenſes.

As to the doctrine of the reſurrection of the body, which they profeſſed to hold in great contempt, as a mere clog to the immortal ſoul, they thought that nothing was meant by it, but either a moral change in the minds of men, which took place before they died; or that it ſignified the aſcent of the ſoul to its proper abode in the ſuperior regions, when it was diſengaged from its earthly incumbrance.

This doctrine they might think (as many now do) would ſufficiently anſwer the purpoſe of a future ſtate of retribution, which alone is the great object and end of chriſtianity, and of all religion, as well as the more ſimple, but to them the more improbable doctrine, which the apoſtles taught, of a reſurrection of any thing that had died, and had been committed to the grave.

That ſome of the Gnoſtics, in conſequence of making no account of the body, might think that there was neither moral good nor evil in any thing relating to it, and might therefore think themſelves at liberty to indulge themſelves in any ſenſual exceſſes, is not impoſſible; though it is more probable that every thing of this nature would be greatly exaggerated by the enemies of the Gnoſtics; and the apoſtles themſelves, being men, might too haſtily give credit to what they had heard reported concerning them; as very ſenſible and worthy men among the heathens for a long time did with reſpect to ſimilar reports concerning chriſtianity in general; and as many perſons now do with reſpect to new ſects in particular, and all thoſe who, on other accounts, have become the objects of general diſlike.

It

It cannot be denied, becauſe it is clearly implied in the writings of the apoſtle Paul himſelf, that others of the Gnoſtics, who held the ſame general principle, of the infinite ſuperiority of the mind to the body, were led by it to acts of mortification, abſtaining from fleſh meat, wine, and reprobating even marriage. That the Gnoſtics believed in a future ſtate, and the divine miſſion of Chriſt, is evident from there being martyrs among them; though others of them might not think that any *truth* was of ſo much conſequence as that men ſhould die for it, which we ſee to have been the caſe with many other chriſtians, who were not Gnoſtics.

The *religious rites* of chriſtians of this early period were few and ſimple. Their public worſhip was probably conducted as was that of the Jews, to which they had been accuſtomed in their ſynagogues, where the ſcriptures were always read, and prayers made, and where exhortations were occaſionally given, and the portions of ſcripture, which were read in courſe, were ſometimes expounded. To this they added the celebration of the euchariſt, or eating bread and wine in remembrance of the death of Chriſt, but probably

bably with little form, and in ſuch a manner as to take up but little time.

We have no diſtinct account of the adminiſtration of baptiſm in this period; but it is evident that very few words were employed in the buſineſs. In general, it was, no doubt, performed by the immerſion of the body in water, that being an eaſy and a pleaſant cuſtom in hot climates, and the dreſs was ſuch as to be very eaſily put off and on. The baths alſo would furniſh convenience for this ceremony in moſt places. In whatever the rite of baptiſm conſiſted, it was adminiſtered upon the ſimple profeſſion of repentance, and faith in Chriſt; the perſon who adminiſtered it probably ſaying, "I baptiſe thee in the name of "Jeſus Chriſt," or varying the expreſſion as he thought proper. If we may judge from the inſtances of baptiſm occaſionally mentioned in the book of Acts, we may ſafely conclude that the perſons who baptized did not think themſelves obliged to make uſe of the form mentioned by Matthew, "In the name of the "Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy "Ghoſt;" though nothing was originally meant by that, beſides baptiſm into a religion which came from God, which was publiſhed by

Chriſt,

Chriſt, and confirmed by gifts of the Holy Spirit, or miracles.

The *church government* of the apoſtolical age was as ſimple as the rites of it. The perſons who had the moſt authority were the *elders*, a title which had been borne by the rulers of the Jewiſh ſynagogues; and the ſame perſons were indifferently called *biſhops*, or *overſeers;* having the general inſpection of every thing relating to any particular church, and giving their time and attention to the concerns of it, according to their ſeveral qualifications; ſome in public teaching, others in keeping up order and diſcipline, others probably viſiting the ſick, and others inſtructing the young, &c. &c.

It is not improbable but that when the book of Revelation was written, one of theſe elders, in conſequence of preſiding (as ſome one of them muſt have done) when they were met to conſult about any thing in common, might have obtained ſome title peculiar to himſelf, as that of *angel*, which is there uſed, though we never find any farther mention of it. Afterwards the title of *biſhop* became appropriated to this perſon, while the reſt retained the original appellation of *preſbyters*, which in a later period was changed into *prieſts*. But

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in all the early ages the biſhop had no power, but as one of the body of elders, and what he derived from his perſonal influence; though this (as he would, of courſe, be the moſt reſpectable of the elders) would no doubt be conſiderable. There was, however, no act or office, which might not have been done as regularly by any other of the elders as by himſelf, and he had no authority beyond his own church, or as we ſhould ſay, pariſh.

Another order of perſons in the primitive church, was that of *deacons*, a rank ſubordinate to that of elders. They were generally young men, whoſe buſineſs it was to attend to the ſecular affairs of the ſociety, under the direction of the elders; but as an accurate diſtinction in offices was not much attended to, it is probable that the deacons were often employed in aſſiſting the elders in their proper functions, for which they would by this means be gradually prepared. Thus the ſeven extraordinary deacons who were choſen to aſſiſt the apoſtles in the care of the poor, did not confine themſelves to that office, but became, ſome of them at leaſt, eminent preachers, like the apoſtles themſelves, of which the hiſtory of Stephen and Philip is a ſufficient proof.

Women,

Women, and particularly widows who were poor, were, in this age of primitive ſimplicity, employed in certain offices in the church, probably in attending the ſick, aſſiſting ſtrangers, &c. for which they were allowed a certain ſtipend. To this, no doubt, Paul alludes when he ſays, *honour widows that are widows indeed*, as he alludes to the ſalaries of the elders where he ſays that, *they who have ruled well are worthy of double honour*. Such alſo is, no doubt, the meaning of the word *honour* in the fifth commandment, *Honour thy father and thy mother*, that is, give them a ſufficient maintenance.

The fund for theſe expences was a common ſtock, to which every perſon contributed according to his ability, a collection being probably made for this purpoſe every Lord's day; and out of it the poor were relieved, and the officers were paid, according to their occaſions. The rich, no doubt, received nothing, but cheerfully gave their time and attendance to whatever buſineſs they undertook, and others received no more than was neceſſary to their comfortable ſubſiſtence, and decent appearance.

The appointment of ſalaries, as well as the proportion of relief to the poor, and every

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thing elſe relating to the adminiſtration of the affairs of the ſociety, was made by the vote of all the members of it, including the common people, as well as the elders and deacons. For ſuch was the cuſtom till a pretty late period in the hiſtory of chriſtianity. But in thoſe days of truly chriſtian ſimplicity and zeal the great *object* and *uſe* of every particular regulation was more attended to, than any *honour* or *emolument* that reſulted from it. Afterwards, alas! the object was leſs thought of, and the perſonal conſideration more; till at length the latter wholly ſwallowed up the former; places and appointments in the church being conſidered in no other light than as means of advancing men in rank and fortune in the world.

PERIOD

PERIOD II.

OF THE PERSECUTION BY DOMITIAN, AND THE HISTORY OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH TO THE END OF THE REIGN OF ADRIAN. A.D. 138.

SECTION I.

From the death of Nero, A. D. 69, *to that of Trajan*, A. D. 117.

NERO had rendered himſelf ſo odious by his folly and cruelty, that after his death, it is probable that his meaſures would be as unpopular as himſelf; and therefore that, though the laws againſt chriſtianity ſtill ſubſiſted they were not then generally executed. In general acts of violence do not continue long, humanity interpoſes, and the minds of the moſt cruel relent. There is at leaſt a ſilence concerning any particular cruelties exerciſed againſt chriſtians, from the death of Nero till the latter end of the reign of Domi-

tian, a period of about thirty years, in which it cannot be doubted but that chriſtianity continued to ſpread in all the provinces of the empire, as well as in other parts of the world. Euſebius expreſſly ſays, that Veſpaſian, attempted nothing againſt the chriſtians *. Domitian, however, who, in the latter part of his reign, very much reſembled Nero, imitated him alſo in his perſecution of the chriſtians, though he does not appear to have carried it on with the ſame violence; and he ſeems to have been led to it by his jealouſy and diſlike of the Jews.

The prophecies concerning a king, or a conqueror, to ariſe in the Eaſt, though Joſephus had maintained that they were fulfilled in his father Veſpaſian, who was raiſed to the empire in that part of the world, probably continued to give ſome alarm, ſo that the emperor was not quite eaſy about them. Indeed, the mind of Veſpaſian himſelf had not been perfectly at reſt on this ſubject. For after the taking of Jeruſalem, he ordered that enquiry ſhould be made concerning the deſcendants of David, that he might exterminate all who were of that royal line †. Do-

* Euſeb. Hiſt. Lib. iii. Cap. 17. p. 108.
† Ibid. Lib. iii. Cap. 12. p. 106.

mitian, hearing that ſome relations of Jeſus were living, gave orders that they ſhould be executed, and two grandſons of the apoſtle Judas, who is called the brother of Jeſus, being ſent to him, he enquired of them, whether they were of the family of David. When they acknowledged that they were, he enquired concerning their eſtates and property, to which they replied that they were together poſſeſſed of a thouſand denarii, not in money, but in land, conſiſting of thirty-nine acres (ϖληθρα) out of which, by their own labour, they maintained themſelves, and paid the taxes; and they ſhewed their hands callous with labour.

The emperor then enquired of them concerning Chriſt and his kingdom, when and where it would be ſet up. To this they replied that his kingdom was not an earthly one, but angelic, and heavenly, to commence at the end of time, when he would come in glory, to judge the living and the dead, and to give to every one according to his works. With theſe anſwers Domitian was ſo well ſatisfied, that, thinking he had nothing to fear from men who made ſo wretched an appearance, he not only diſmiſſed them; but alſo

put a ſtop to the perſecution; and it was not reſumed till the time of Trajan*.

In this perſecution the apoſtle John was baniſhed to the iſle of Patmos, in the Ægean ſea, and there he had the viſion which is recorded in the book of Revelation. Alſo Flavia Domitalla the neice of Flavius Clemens, who was then conſul, together with many others was ſent to the iſle of Pontia †. And it is probable from Tertullian, and Oroſius, that though Domitian himſelf might not proceed to any great extremities in the perſecution of the chriſtians, advantage was taken of it in ſeveral parts of the empire, by thoſe governors of provinces who were not their friends, to exerciſe greater ſeverities, ſuch as had been inflicted in the time of Nero. For, according to the ſuperſtition of the times, the chriſtians, who taught a new religion, the object of which was the extirpation of the old ones, were thought to be the cauſe of all public calamities. If the Tiber flowed higher than uſual, or the Nile not ſo high; if there was any alarming appearance in the heavens; if there happened to be an earthquake, peſti-

* Euſeb. Hiſt. Lib. iii. Cap. 20. p. 110.
† Ibid. Lib. iii. Cap. 18. p. 109.

lence,

lence, or famine, the common people were enraged, and were clamorous to have the chriſtians ſacrificed, and thrown to the lions in the public games *.

On the ceſſation of this perſecution, the apoſtle John returned to Epheſus, and viſited the churches in that province and the neighbouring ones. It is ſaid that, though, on account of his great age, he was not able to preach, he would always attend the place of public worſhip, and frequently ſay, "My "little children love one another †."

Domitian was ſucceeded by Nerva, a man of an excellent diſpoſition, the reverſe of his predeceſſor, in his behaviour to the chriſtians, as well as in other reſpects. According to Dio Caſſius ‡, he forbad the perſecution of any perſons either for Judaiſm, or for *impiety;* by which is to be underſtood chriſtianity, being ſo called by the heathens on account of its being hoſtile to their worſhip; and becauſe chriſtians, having no temples, altars, or ſacrifices, were commonly ſaid to be without religion.

* Oroſ. Lib. vii. Cap. 10. p. 483. Tert. Apol. Cap. xl. p. 32.
† Jer. in Epiſt. ad Gal. Cap. 6. Opera Vol. vi. p. 158.
‡ In Xiphilin, p. 126.

The apoſtle John is ſaid to have died in the reign of Nerva, or Trajan, having ſurvived the perſecution of Domitian, but how long is uncertain. According to Polycrates, biſhop of Epheſus*, he died and was buried at Epheſus.

Though Nero and Domitian, the firſt of the Roman emperors who perſecuted the chriſtians, were bad men in other reſpects, we muſt not conclude that all perſecutors have been perſons of this character. Others thought it their duty to act this part. Thus Trajan, who ſucceeded Nerva, being intent upon reſtoring the empire, and extending the bounds of it, and being withal very ſuperſtitious, imagined, as the heathens in general did, that this end could not be gained without the re-eſtabliſhment of the ancient religion, under which the Roman empire had been formed and flouriſhed; and chriſtianity had by this time gained ſo much ground, that the feſtivals, and ſacrifices, of the heathen worſhip began to be much neglected, eſpecially in Aſia Minor, and the eaſtern provinces of the empire; ſo as to become the ſubject of great and general complaint. In conſequence of this, Trajan procured from

* Euſeb. Hiſt. Lib. iii. Cap. 31. p. 125.

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the ſenate an order to reſtore the ancient religion. On the ſame principle alſo Marcus Antoninus was a more unrelenting perſecutor of the chriſtians than Trajan had been.

The younger Pliny, the particular favourite of Trajan, and governor of Bythinia, was one, among others, who carried the orders of the emperor and of the ſenate into execution. But ſo great was the number of perſons whoſe lives were forfeited by this edict, that he was at a loſs how to proceed, and therefore applied to the emperor for farther inſtructions. The letter which he wrote on this occaſion is extant, and is highly favourable to the chriſtians of that age, as the writer acknowledges that they could not be proved to be guilty of any immorality, or of obſtinacy, except in adhering to their religion, and chuſing to die rather than to abandon it. It alſo contains a moſt authentic evidence of the great ſpread of chriſtianity in that early period, when the facts on which it is grounded were recent.

"Suſpending," ſays he, "all judicial proceedings, I have recourſe to you for advice. "For it has appeared to me a matter highly "deſerving of conſideration, eſpecially on account of the great number of perſons who "are in danger of ſuffering. Many of all

"ages, and every rank, of both ſexes alſo, are "accuſed, and will be accuſed. Nor has the "contagion of this ſuperſtition ſeized the "cities only, but the leſſer towns alſo, and "the open country. Nevertheleſs, it ſeems "to me, that it may be reſtrained and cor-"rected. It is certain that the temples, which "were almoſt forſaken, begin to be more fre-"quented, and the ſacred ſolemnities, after a "long intermiſſion, are revived. Victims "likewiſe are every were bought up, whereas "for ſome time there were few purchaſers; "whence it is eaſy to imagine what numbers "of perſons might be reclaimed, if pardon "were granted to thoſe who ſhould repent *."

So thought this governor, who was probably intirely unacquainted with the principles of chriſtianity, and with the nature and ſtrength of its evidence; and who, like many other men in power, and even men of letters, at that time, thought it beneath them to make any ſerious enquiry on the ſubject. Others who did ſo were ſatisfied that it was founded in truth. Pliny ſays that among the chriſtians were perſons of all ranks. Some of them, therefore, it may be preſumed, were as reſpectable as himſelf.

* Epiſt. 97. Lib. x.

The

The emperor, in his anſwer, approved of the conduct of Pliny, and being probably ſtruck with the number of chriſtians, he ordered that they ſhould not be ſought out; but, perſiſting in his meaſures, he ordered that, if any were regularly convicted of being chriſtians, and did not retract, by performing ſome act of worſhip to the gods, they ſhould be puniſhed *. This was a regulation of the perſecution, and by no means a ſuppreſſion of it; though, if the governors of provinces were diſpoſed to favour the chriſtians, it would be now more in their power to ſcreen them. But great outrages might ſtill be committed by the populace, which Euſebius ſays was the caſe at this time †; and where the governors were hoſtile to the chriſtians, they would be little better for the edict.

One of the martyrs of principal note in this perſecution was Symeon, the ſon of Cleopas, the biſhop of Jeruſalem, who ſucceeded the apoſtle James. He is ſaid by Hegeſippus to have been accuſed by ſome heretics, and to have borne various kinds of torture many ſucceſſive days, to the admiration of Atticus his judge, and the officers who applied the tor-

* Epiſt. 98. Lib. x.

† Euſeb. Hiſt. Lib. iii. Cap. 32. p. 126.

ture,

ture, eſpecially as he was ſaid to have been an hundred and twenty years old. As he ſurvived the different modes of torture, this venerable old man was at length crucified *.

But the moſt diſtinguiſhed martyr in this perſecution, of whom we have any particular account, was Ignatius, the ſecond biſhop of Antioch. Being brought before the emperor himſelf, when he was on his expedition againſt the Parthians, he was by him ſentenced to be thrown to the wild beaſts at Rome; and this he heard not only without diſmay, but with ſeeming ſatisfaction. Being conducted at leiſure through Aſia Minor, he earneſtly exhorted the chriſtians to whom he had acceſs to perſevere in the profeſſion of chriſtianity, and alſo to be upon their guard againſt the principles of the Gnoſtics, which, as we ſhall preſently ſee, began about that time to prevail more than they had done before; and as the Gnoſtics ſeparated themſelves from the communion of the catholic church, he moſt earneſtly beſought all chriſtians to adhere to their regular biſhops, and clergy. Having liberty to write, he expreſſed his ſentiments in ſeveral letters, addreſſed to particular churches, which, with many in-

* Euſeb. Hiſt. Lib. iii. Cap. 32. p. 127.

terpo-

terpolations, are ſtill extant. In theſe letters he often ſpeaks of his approaching death, not only without terror, but with joy*.

SECTION II.

From the Death of Trajan, A. D. 117, *to that of Adrian. A. D.* 138.

THE reign of Trajan, which was nearly twenty-one years, and eſpecially the early part of it, was unfavourable to chriſtianity, as far as perſecution can be ſaid to make it ſo. That of Adrian, which followed, and continued twenty-one years, was favourable to it, though no law againſt the chriſtians was properly repealed. But this emperor reſtrained the malice of the licentious populace, who were often ſo clamorous for the execution of chriſtians, eſpecially for their being thrown to the wild beaſts (a barbarous entertainment of which the bulk of the people of that time were extravagantly fond) that the governors of provinces were often obliged to

* Euſeb. Hiſt. Lib. iii. Cap. 36. p. 132.

give

give way to their importunity. Indeed, on ſeveral occaſions, the mere clamour of the mob induced the emperors themſelves to do many things which were both contrary to law, and what they themſelves much diſliked.

Beſides the bigotted attachment of the common people to the religious rites of their anceſtors, which often conſiſted of ſcenes of riot and intemperance, to which the rabble in all countries are much addicted, many abſurd and ſhocking calumnies were in thoſe early times propagated againſt the chriſtians; and to theſe the common people, and many of the better ſort alſo, were too ready to give credit. Of this kind Euſebius mentions the promiſcuous commerce of the ſexes, even with their neareſt relations, and their feeding on execrable food, which other writers explain of their feaſting upon young children, and drinking their blood*. Theſe reports, according to Euſebius, aroſe from the practices of the Gnoſtics; but it is probable that they were no more true of them than they were of the catholics.

In this ſtate of things, two chriſtian writers had the courage to preſent apologies to the emperor for their religion. The firſt was that

* Euſeb. Hiſt. Lib. iv. Cap. 7. p. 149.

of

of Quadratus, biſhop of Athens, in which he did not content himſelf with aſſerting the innocence of the chriſtian tenets and rites, but urged the ſure grounds of the chriſtian faith; aſſerting that the miracles of Chriſt were even then to be ſeen, in the cure of diſeaſes, and the raiſing of the dead; ſome of the perſons in whoſe favour theſe miracles were wrought being then living*. As this was not much more than eighty years after the death of Chriſt, and but a few years after the death of the apoſtle John (and the miracles of the apoſtles might with ſufficient propriety be called the miracles of Chriſt, ſince they were equally proofs of his divine miſſion with the miracles performed by himſelf) what this writer aſſerted is by no means improbable; and, in his critical circumſtances, he would hardly have ventured to allege a fact which could not have been ſatisfactorily aſcertained. Another apology was preſented to Adrian by Ariſtides, who had profeſſed philoſophy at Athens; and this, as well as that of Quadratus, was extant in the time of Euſebius.

It appears alſo that, after the example of Pliny, S. Granius, a proconſul in Aſia Minor, had repreſented the unhappy ſituation of

* Euſeb. Hiſt. Lib. iv. Cap. 3. p. 142.

the

the chriſtians in his province, and eſpecially the outrages which they had ſuffered from the mob. For the edict of the emperor, ſent to his ſucceſſor Minutius Fundanus, directs him not to ſuffer thoſe things; and though he does not repeal the laws againſt the chriſtians, he orders that the penalties ſhould not exceed the nature of the offence, and moreover, that malicious accuſers ſhould not eſcape puniſhment.

That Adrian had no particular hatred againſt the chriſtians, appears from a ſatirical, but facetious letter, of his to Severianus, the huſband of his ſiſter Paulina, preſerved in Vopiſcus, in which, ſpeaking of the viſit he had made to Egypt, and ridiculing the fickleneſs of the people in it, he mentions the variety of religions in the country, and ſays, that every perſon coming there, even the patriarch, would by ſome be required to worſhip Serapis, and by others Chriſt; but that all were buſy, and addicted to gain. "This deity," he ſays, "the chriſtians, this the Jews, this "all the Gentile people worſhip." From this letter it is evident, that the chriſtians in Egypt were not few in number, or timid, but bore a conſiderable proportion to the Jews, and even to the heathens, and that they

they were very aſſiduous in making proſelytes.

By this edict of the emperor, and his known diſpoſition towards them, the chriſtians could not but have been greatly benefited, and it is evident that chriſtianity gained much ground in this reign. Many perſons of learning and inquiry joined them, and the calumnies which had been raiſed againſt them vaniſhed very faſt. Euſebius, ſpeaking of the great number of Gnoſtics in this period, ſays*, that they were greatly eclipſed by the catholics, who received freſh additions to their number every day, and that the ſanctity of their manners ſtruck with reſpect not only the Greeks, but the Barbarians alſo. He adds, that the calumnies by which they had ſuffered were then ſo fully refuted, that from that time to his own no perſon had ventured to defame them. This, however, could only be the caſe in general. For certainly, by ſome, reports to the diſadvantage of chriſtianity were believed, and propagated, long after this time.

That there was no great perſecution of chriſtians in the time of Adrian, may with great probability be inferred from there being no account of any particular and diſtinguiſhed

* Euſeb. Hiſt. Lib. iv. Cap. 7. p. 149.

martyrs

martyrs in the whole courſe of it. In all perſecutions, indeed, the names of but few of the ſufferers are preſerved, thoſe only being noticed by writers in whoſe character, or caſe, there was ſomething extraordinary, ſo as to excite particular attention. Still, however, when *no* names are mentioned, we may preſume that, compared at leaſt with the times preceding and following it, there was no great cauſe of complaint.

The chriſtians were ſo well known in this age, that there was no danger of confounding them with the Jews, as was the caſe when they firſt appeared; and as the affairs of the chriſtians flouriſhed, the calamities of the Jewiſh nation increaſed. In the eighth year of Trajan, the Jews of Egypt and Cyrenaica revolted, and at firſt had ſome advantage againſt the Greeks; but theſe, taking refuge at Alexandria, ſlew the Jews who reſided there; and thoſe of Cyrene, wanting their aſſiſtance, were not able to carry on a regular war, and therefore contented themſelves with plundering the country, being commanded by one Lucua, called by Euſebius, their king. At length the emperor, ſending againſt them Marcius Turbo, with a ſufficient force by land and ſea, after many engagements, and in a long

long courſe of time, deſtroyed great numbers of them, ſo as to put an entire end to their ravages *. The emperor, fearing leſt the Jews in Meſopotamia ſhould moleſt the other inhabitants, ordered L. Quietus to expel them from that province. Accordingly, in a pitched battle, he defeated a great number of them, and on account of this victory he was made governor of Judea.

But what the Jews ſuffered under Trajan, was little when compared with the calamities which befel them in the following reign of Adrian. Having revolted under Barchocab, who had been nothing better than a leader of banditti, but who had flattered them with a proſpect of ſome great deliverance (probably giving out that he was the meſſiah) they were ſubdued by Rufus the governor, who made uſe of his advantage to exerciſe the moſt ſhocking cruelties; killing an infinite number of men, together with their wives and children. At length, in the eighth year of Adrian, when the whole war was reduced to the ſiege of Betthera, a fortified place not far from Jeruſalem, the Jews within it ſuffered the greateſt extremes of hunger and thirſt,

* Euſeb. Hiſt. Lib. iv. Cap. 1. p. 142.

and the fortreſs being at length taken, Barchocab himſelf was put to death. Alſo, to prevent any future revolt of the nation, the whole race of the Jews were forbidden to ſet foot in their own country, or even to ſee it at a diſtance.

Thus, ſays Euſebius, was the land of Judea emptied of its own inhabitants, and peopled by a concourſe of ſtrangers; a Roman colony being fixed at Jeruſalem, which, in honour of the emperor Ælius Adrian, was called Ælia. There being no more any Jews in the place, the chriſtian church, which aroſe there, conſiſted wholly of Gentiles, and their firſt biſhop, after thoſe of the circumciſion, bore the name of Marcus*.

After the deſtruction of Jeruſalem by Titus, many of the Jewiſh chriſtians returned to the place, and kept up the form of a church till the time of Adrian. The names of the biſhops are preſerved in Euſebius, and they ſucceeded James the brother of Chriſt in the following order: Simeon, Juſtus, Zaccheus, Tobias, Benjamin, John, Matthew, Philip, Simeon, Juſtus, Levi, Ephraim, Joſeph, and Judas; though, excepting Simeon, the firſt

* Euſeb. Hiſt. Lib. iv. Cap, 6. p. 144.

of

of them, we know nothing of theſe, beſides their names. Yet as they ſucceeded the apoſtles in the ancient mother church, I thought it not amiſs to give the catalogue of them.

SECTION III.

Of the Gnoſtics in the reign of Adrian.

THE chriſtian writers of this and the following age make grievous complaints of the increaſe of *Gnoſticiſm* in the time of Adrian; and no doubt, in ſome reſpects, with reaſon, as it was a great corruption of the true chriſtian principles. But this circumſtance is an inconteſtible and valuable proof of the favourable reception of chriſtianity by the learned and inquiſitive of that age. Thoſe who diſtinguiſhed themſelves as Gnoſtic chriſtians were the literati and philoſophers of their times; who being convinced by hiſtorical evidence, of the truth of the miracles and reſurrection of Chriſt, were led to embrace chriſtianity; at the ſame time that, not being able to diveſt themſelves of their philoſophical

 prin-

principles, they endeavoured to retain both; and doubtleſs, thought they could do it very conſiſtently; conſidering Chriſt and the apoſtles as ſent by God to teach certain important truths, but who (either not being philoſophers, or having their reaſons for concealing their more ſublime tenets, which were connected with their doctrines) taught what they knew in language adapted to the vulgar.

We have ſeen the riſe of this ſyſtem in the times of the apoſtles, and the offence which it juſtly gave them. But notwithſtanding this, and though their remonſtrances might prevent the ſpread of this philoſophical chriſtianity for a time, other perſons aroſe, who either were not moved by the authority of the apoſtles (with reſpect to what they might think they had no particular commiſſion to teach) or finding means to explain what they had written, ſo as not to be unfavourable to their ſentiments, revived the ſame general doctrines, perhaps with ſome little variation. And when, about this time, chriſtianity made more rapid advances than ever it had done before, ſo as to engage the attention of all ranks and claſſes of men, it is not ſurprizing that, while the greater part received it as it was plainly taught by the apoſtles, ſome per-

4 ſons

ſons of a ſpeculative turn ſhould receive it in conjunction with their philoſophical tenets.

That nothing but the ſtrongeſt evidence, and that of the plain hiſtorical kind, could have led theſe philoſophers to embrace chriſtianity, is evident from the oppoſition that was for ſome time made to it by perſons of this claſs, as by Simon Magus and his immediate followers. It was, indeed, the union of principles which were far from having any natural connexion. The philoſophers of that age, viz. thoſe of the Eaſt, could not believe that ſuch a world as this, abounding with ſo many evils, could have been made by the Supreme Being, who is perfectly good; and they had always been uſed to regard with extreme diſlike and contempt the ceremonies of the Jewiſh religion. They therefore thought that the world was made by inferior and imperfect beings, and that the Jewiſh religion had no better origin. They had always regarded *matter* with peculiar averſion, as a clog to pre-exiſtent lapſed ſpirits, who longed to regain their liberty, and riſe unfettered to their priſtine ſeat in the empyreal regions. They therefore could not bear the idea of the reſurrection of this hated body.

Yet, notwithſtanding theſe fixed principles, without the aid of any arguments in favour of chriſtianity derived from the Jewiſh ſcriptures, and its prophecies (of the divine origin of which they could not but know that Chriſt and the apoſtles were fully perſuaded) they could not refuſe their aſſent to the evidence of the recent facts of the goſpel hiſtory. They therefore retained their former principles, as a ſublime philoſophy, which was not wholly inconſiſtent with the plainer chriſtianity of the common people.

Juſtin Martyr, who was well acquainted with the Gnoſtics, and who wrote a treatiſe againſt them which is now loſt, ſums up the principal of their tenets in two paſſages, in his Dialogue with Trypho *, in which he ſays, " they blaſphemed the Maker of the " univerſe, and the God of Abraham, Iſaac, " and Jacob; ſome of them being called Mar- " cionites, ſome Valentinians, ſome Baſili- " dians, ſome Saturnianians, and others going " by other names; who ſay that there is no " reſurrection of the dead, but that immedi- " ately after death ſouls are received into " heaven. Do not," he adds, " take theſe " to be chriſtians †."

* P. 308 and 311. † Dial. p. 311.

It

It is remarkable, that at the ſame time that Juſtin makes this exclamation againſt the Gnoſtics, calling their tenets impious and blaſphemous, he was himſelf uniting with the plain goſpel of Chriſt, other philoſophical tenets, little leſs heterogeneous to it, though from a different ſchool, viz. that of Plato, to which he was attached. This union of philoſophy and Platoniſm afterwards produced a ſyſtem far more abſurd, and more directly contrary to the principles of the goſpel, than any thing that Gnoſticiſm could have led to, as we ſhall ſee in the courſe of this hiſtory.

The Gnoſtics whom I have now deſcribed regarded with contempt the ſyſtem of the Jewiſh religion. But it appears from the writings of the apoſtles, that many Jews, and thoſe the moſt zealous for the rites of their religion, held Gnoſtic principles. Theſe muſt have been Jews of a ſpeculative turn, who with other philoſophers (though they might not perhaps believe that the world was made by inferior and imperfect beings) regarded matter, and the body, with contempt, and were no believers in a proper reſurrection. Theſe philoſophical Jews held theſe new tenets in conjunction with their belief in the

 divine

divine inſpiration of Moſes, juſt as the Gnoſtics in Adrian's time, who were unbelievers in the divine inſpiration of Moſes, held the ſame philoſophical tenets in conjunction with their belief of the divine miſſion of Chriſt.

Of the claſs of Jewiſh Gnoſtics was probably Cerinthus, who is ſaid to have oppoſed the apoſtle John; and conſidering the vehemence with which this apoſtle writes againſt the Gnoſtics, an anecdote which Irenæus ſays he had from Polycarp, who was acquainted with the apoſtles, and was by them ordained biſhop of Smyrna, I do not think altogether improbable, viz. that finding himſelf in a public bath together with Cerinthus, he made haſte to leave the place, ſaying, "Let us flee, "leſt the bath in which is Cerinthus, the "enemy of truth, fall upon us*." In this manner might this apoſtle chuſe to expreſs his averſion to Cerinthus and his principles. The Nicolaitans, who are mentioned with great indignation in the book of Revelation, as addicted to ſome practices highly cenſurable, were probably Gnoſtics of this claſs†.

An anecdote ſimilar to that which Irenæus from Polycarp relates concerning John is told

* Euſeb. Hiſt Lib. iv. Cap 14. p. 161.
† Ibid. Lib. iii. Cap. 29 p. 123.

of

of Polycarp himſelf, viz. that being met by Marcion, and aſked whether he would acknowledge him, meaning as a chriſtian and a brother, he replied I acknowledge thee to be the firſt born of Satan *. The philoſophical Marcion would probably ſmile at this angry reply of the venerable old biſhop.

After the age of the apoſtles, we have no diſtinct account of any other eminent Gnoſtics of the ſame claſs with Cerinthus, who is ſaid to have had many followers, eſpecially in Aſia Minor, though ſome of the ſect of the Gnoſtics enumerated by Hegeſippus, were probably Jews. For he ſpeaks of the church of Jeruſalem as continuing a pure virgin till the time of Simeon, the laſt of the Jewiſh biſhops of Jeruſalem. "Till that time," he ſays, "it was not corrupted with abſurd doctrines (an expreſſion almoſt appropriated to the Gnoſtic notions) but firſt Thebuthis, be-"cauſe he was not made a biſhop, began to "corrupt it, his being one of the ſeven he-"reſies. After him were the Simonians from "Simon, the Cleobeans from Cleobius, the "Doſitheans from Doſitheus, the Gortheans "from Gortheus, and the Maſbotheans. "From them came the Menandrians, the

* Euſeb. Hiſt. Lib. iv. Cap. 14. p. 161.

"Mar-

" Marcionites, the Carpocratians, the Valen-
" tinians, the Baſilidians, and Saturnianians,
" each of them preaching their different doc-
" trines. From them came falſe Chriſts,
" and falſe prophets, who divided the unity
" of the church with corrupt doctrines, againſt
" God, and againſt his Chriſt *."

We may the leſs wonder at our hearing of no particular Gnoſtics among the Jews, as we have ſo few accounts of the Jewiſh chriſtians themſelves. But the Gnoſtics among the Gentile chriſtians made a great figure at this time, under leaders of diſtinguiſhed eminence, who wrote many books, which employed the learned among the catholics of ſome centuries to anſwer. They are repreſented as having been the diſciples of one another in regular ſucceſſion, beginning with Doſitheus, who is ſaid to have been the maſter of Simon, as Simon was of Menander, a Samaritan, and Menander of Saturninus of Antioch, who was followed by Baſilides of Alexandria *.

Cerdon who is ſaid to have been the diſciple of Simon, came to Rome in the pontificate of Hyginus, the ninth from the time of the apoſtles. He was ſucceeded by Marcion of

* Euſeb. Hiſt. Lib. iv. Cap. 24. p. 122.
† Ibid. Lib. iv. Cap. 7. p. 147.

Pontus,

Pontus, who had many more followers*. But the perſon whoſe diſciples were the moſt numerous was Valentinus, who alſo viſited Rome in the time of Hyginus. He flouriſhed chiefly in the time of the emperor Antoninus Pius, and continued to the time of Anicetus.

In the time of Hegeſippus Gnoſticiſm (which was the only ſyſtem that this writer conſidered as hereſy) had not infected the greater churches. He came to Rome in the time of Anicetus, and on his journey converſed with many biſhops, and particularly viſited the church of Corinth, and found in all of them what he calls the doctrine of the apoſtles*.

* Euſeb. Hiſt. Lib. iv Cap. 11. p. 154.
† Ibid. Lib. iv. Cap. 24. p. 181.

SECTION IV.

Of the Chriſtian Writers in this Period.

WITHIN this period the apoſtle John wrote his book of the *Revelation*, containing an account of the viſions which he had in the iſle of Patmos, whither he had been baniſhed by Domitian. It was, however, long objected to by many, as not written by this apoſtle; and ſome are ſtill averſe to receive it. I ſhall not enter into the arguments for or againſt this book; but what has been alleged in favour of its having been written by the apoſtle preponderates with me.

There is no doubt of the genuineneſs of the three epiſtles of John, or of their having been written near the cloſe of his life; one a general epiſtle, and the two others addreſſed to particular perſons. The principal object of them all is to guard thoſe to whom he writes againſt the opinions of the Gnoſtics, eſpecially the Docetæ, who held that Chriſt was man only in appearance, and had not real fleſh and blood. He alſo inculcates, in a moſt earneſt and affectionate manner, the chriſtian duty

duty of brotherly love, and exhorts to practical virtue in general.

The other writers within this period are very few, and of them few are extant, except ſuch as are evidently interpolated.

The oldeſt work of the age, if it had been genuine, is that which goes by the name of *The epiſtle of Barnabas*. The deſign of it is the ſame with that of Paul to the Galatians, and the Hebrews; viz. to ſhew the ſuperiority of the goſpel to the law of Moſes. Whoever was the author of this epiſtle, it was probably written ſoon after the deſtruction of Jeruſalem. It abounds with interpretations of the Old Teſtament which diſcover much more of imagination, than of judgment.

The moſt valuable, and unqueſtionably genuine, production of this age, is an epiſtle to the church of Corinth by Clemens, Biſhop of Rome, the ſame whom Paul mentions*, as one of his *fellow labourers, whoſe names were in the book of life*. This epiſtle was held in the higheſt eſteem by all chriſtians, and, like the ſcriptures, was publicly read in many churches. It is an earneſt diſſuaſive from the ſpirit of faction, which appeared in the church of Corinth, and which was indeed ſuf-

* Phil. iv. 3.

ficiently conſpicuous when Paul wrote his epiſtles. There is extant another epiſtle aſcribed to this Clemens, but it is evidently ſpurious, and was probably written in the middle of the third century. So highly was this Clemens eſteemed by chriſtians of a later age, that ſeveral other writings were palmed upon him, eſpecially the *Apoſtolical Conſtitutions*, and the *Clementine homilies*, of which an account will be given in their proper place.

Another work of doubtful authority is *the Shepherd of Hermas*, by ſome thought to be that Hermas who is mentioned by Paul in his epiſtle to the Romans; but by others ſuppoſed to be either ſpurious, or to have been written by a later Hermas, or rather Hermes, brother of Pius, biſhop of Rome, about the year 140. Whoever was the author of this work (and though it was ſo much eſteemed by many chriſtians, as to be publicly read in their churches *) it is certainly a very poor

* From this we may with great probability infer that, in this early age, the canonical books of the New Teſtament were not thought by chriſtians to be written by a proper inſpiration. For they certainly did not conſider the epiſtle of Clemens, or the viſions of Hermas, as ſo written; and ſince the idea of the books of ſcripture being inſpired has prevailed, it has been thought improper to put any other writings ſo much upon a level with

performance. It conſiſts of three viſions, twelve commands, and ten ſimilitudes. The object of them all is to inculcate moral duties, but the method of doing it, by viſions or revelations, which were certainly fictitious, is not to be juſtified. Euſebius does not determine whether this work be genuine or not*.

It is probable that the *epiſtles* aſcribed to *Ignatius*, eſpecially the leſſer ones, are in the main genuine, and the interpolations that are in them may eaſily be diſtinguiſhed. They were written, as was mentioned before, on his journey to Rome, to encourage chriſtians in a ſtate of perſecution, and to warn them againſt the principles of the Gnoſtics.

We have a *letter of Polycarp*, biſhop of Smyrna, to the Philippians, written to enforce the practice of moral duties, and to diſſuade from the principles of the Gnoſtics. An account of the martyrdom of this excellent man will be given in the next period.

In the time of Euſebius there were extant *five books of Papias, biſhop of* Hierapolis in Syria, a hearer of the apoſtle John, and a companion of Polycarp, *of the interpretation of the*

with them, or to read them alike in the time of public worſhip.

* Lib. iii. Cap. 3. p. 90.

divine

divine oracles. Papias was a great collector of the ſayings of the apoſtles; and one of the traditions preſerved by him was that, after the reſurrection, Chriſt would reign upon earth a thouſand years, an opinion which, from his authority, was long reſpected by many *.

The apologies of Quadratus and Ariſtides addreſſed to Adrian were mentioned before.

Among the chriſtian writers in the time of Adrian, Euſebius mentions Hegeſippus, and alſo Juſtin; but as the apology of the later was addreſſed to Antoninus Pius, I ſhall ſpeak of them both hereafter.

To this account of chriſtian writers, it may be proper to add that of two Jewiſh authors, as their works are of particular importance to chriſtians, viz. Philo and Joſephus.

Philo was a native of Alexandria, brother to the chief magiſtrate among the Jews in that place, and he was ſent at the head of the embaſſy to Caligula, as has been mentioned. His writings, which are numerous, ſhew that he was much attached to the Platonic philoſophy; and he made a very abſurd uſe of it in interpreting the ſcriptures of the Old Teſtament, which is the object of moſt of his works. In fact, he repreſents the writings of

* Euſeb. Hiſt. Lib. iii. Cap. 39. p. 135.

Moſes

Moſes as a kind of allegory, the true meaning of which is to be found in the principles of Plato; though we are not to ſuppoſe that he therefore conſidered the Moſaical hiſtory as a fable, deſtitute of hiſtorical truth. In this mode of interpreting ſcripture Philo was unhappily followed by Origen, and other learned chriſtians, for which they are juſtly ridiculed by Porphyry, as Philo was by Celſus. From Philo it was that the platonizing chriſtian fathers learned the perſonification of the divine logos; ſo that, without being a chriſtian, he may be conſidered as having laid the foundation of the doctrine of the trinity.

Joſephus is a writer of much greater value, as his principal work is a hiſtory of the Jewiſh nation from the beginning, and contains a particular account of the later periods of it, and of the deſtruction of Jeruſalem, and the other calamities which befel the nation, of which he was an eye witneſs, having had the command of an army; and having been taken priſoner and treated with great kindneſs by Veſpaſian and Titus. His hiſtory bears marks of a deſire to recommend himſelf to the Greeks and Romans; but this appeared more particularly by his maintaining that Veſpaſian, who was proclaimed emperor in the

Eaſt, was the Meſſiah of the ancient prophets. He carefully omits all mention of Chriſt, or of chriſtians. This, as he could not but have been acquainted with them, probably aroſe from his not being able to ſay any ill, and his not chuſing to ſay any good, of them, and ſhows that he had imbibed the general prejudices of his nation againſt them. On this account, however, his hiſtory, which ſhews the exact accompliſhment of our Saviour's predictions concerning the utter deſtruction of Jeruſalem, and the temple, is of the more value to chriſtians.

Beſides his twenty books of Jewiſh Antiquities, and ſeven of the Jewiſh war, we have of Joſephus a panegyric on the Maccabees, his own life, and two books againſt Apion, in defence of his nation and religion. He ſpent the latter part of his life at Rome.

Thus we are come to the concluſion of what may be called the virgin, or pure age of the church, in which we perceive no trace of any doctrine, or practice (excepting thoſe of the Gnoſtics, who in this period were in a great meaſure ſeparated from the catholic church) beſides

beſides thoſe which were derived from the apoſtles themſelves. None of the writers I have mentioned ſo much as allude, in the moſt diſtant manner, to any hereſy but that of the Gnoſtics, which was chriſtianity contaminated with the principles of the oriental philoſophy. In the whole of this period the ſole object of worſhip, in all chriſtian churches, was no other than the one true God, the God and Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt. And Chriſt himſelf was by all conſidered as the moſt diſtinguiſhed of the prophets, who had no exiſtence before the time of his birth in Judea. The memory of what had been uniformly taught by the apoſtles was as yet too recent for any departure from ſuch a fundamental doctrine as that of the unity of God.

In the following period we ſhall have a very different ſcene opening upon us. It could then no longer be ſaid, as hitherto it might be, that there were few men of learning among chriſtians. Philoſophers, as well as other perſons, gave attention to the evidences of chriſtianity, and became converts; ſo that in a ſhort time the number of writers among the heathens bore a ſmall proportion to thoſe among the chriſtians. But the credit which

chriſtianity derived from this flattering circumſtance was in a great meaſure counter-balanced by the foreign opinions which theſe philoſophers brought into chriſtianity, and connected with it; ſince by this means a foundation was laid for a ſyſtem of chriſtian idolatry, little better than that of the heathens, and for various other abuſes and corruptions, through which it was barely poſſible to diſcern the features of primitive chriſtianity.

PERIOD

PERIOD III.

FROM THE DEATH OF ADRIAN, A. D. 138, TO THAT OF MARCUS AURELIUS, A. D. 180.

SECTION I.

Of the ſtate of Chriſtianity in the Reign of Antoninus Pius, and of the Martyrdom of Polycarp and Juſtin, in the Reign of Marcus Aurelius.

ANTONINUS Pius, who ſucceeded Adrian, and reigned twenty-three years, was one of the beſt of emperors, and was diſtinguiſhed for his juſtice and humanity. He was far from perſecuting the chriſtians, though they were perſecuted in his reign, eſpecially in the beginning of it, by ſome governors of provinces, who either took advantage of the laws which were not repealed, or gave way to the clamours of the populace. For, as there had been ſome earthquakes in Aſia, and the

neighbouring countries, the ſuperſtitious heathens, ignorant of their true cauſe, aſcribed them to the anger of the gods, for the deſertion of their worſhip, in conſequence of the ſpread of chriſtianity; and on this account they were guilty of great outrages upon the chriſtians. Of theſe they complained, and Juſtin Martyr preſented to Antoninus an apology, which is ſtill extant, and appears to have been well received. For the emperor iſſued an edict in favour of chriſtians, the authenticity of which is vindicated by Dr. Lardner*.

There is ſo much good ſenſe in this edict, and it diſcovers ſo much knowledge of the principles and conduct of the chriſtians, in this emperor, that I ſhall give it entire in the doctor's tranſlation from Euſebius †.

"The emperor Antoninus, Auguſtus, Ar-"menicus, Pontifex Maximus, &c. to the "ſtates of Aſia ſendeth greeting. I am well "ſatisfied the gods will not ſuffer ſuch men "to be concealed: for undoubtedly they "are more concerned to puniſh thoſe who re-"fuſe to worſhip them than you are. But "you only confirm theſe men in their ſenti-"ments, and make them more obſtinate, by

* Heathen Teſtimonies, Vol. ii. p. 155.
† Lib. iv. Cap. 13. p. 159.

 "calling

" calling them impious, and giving them " vexation. For they are not ſo deſirous to " live, as to be proſecuted, and ſuffer death " for their God. Hence they come off victo- " rious, laying down their lives rather than do " what you demand of them. As for the " earthquakes of the former or the preſent " times, it may not be improper to adviſe " you, to compare yourſelves with them, and " your ſentiments with theirs. For when " ſuch things happen, you are dejected, but " they are full of confidence in God; and you, " in the ignorance you are in, neglect the " other gods, and their rites, and the worſhip " of the immortal likewiſe; and the chriſ- " tians who worſhip him you baniſh, and per- " ſecute to death. Before our time many go- " vernors of provinces wrote to our deified fa- " ther about theſe men, to whom he wrote, " that they ſhould not be moleſted, unleſs " they did things contrary to the welfare of " the Roman government. Many alſo have " informed me about the ſame men, to whom " I returned an anſwer agreeable to the re- " ſcript of my father. If, therefore, any perſon " will ſtill accuſe any of theſe men as ſuch (i. e. " a chriſtian) let the accuſed be acquitted, " though he appear to be ſuch an one, and

" let the accuſed be puniſhed.—Set up at " Epheſus in the common aſſembly of Aſia."

" And that theſe things were ſo done," adds Euſebius, " is atteſted by Melito biſhop " of Sardis, who flouriſhed at that time, in what " he ſays in his excellent apology, which he " made for our religion to the emperor Verus*."

Such being the diſpoſition of this excellent emperor, the perſecutions ariſing from the violence of the common people were, no doubt, reſtrained; and accordingly we have no account of any particular martyrdoms till the following reign of Marcus Aurelius; who, though an excellent emperor in other reſpects, was nevertheleſs a bigotted Pagan. In the eighth year of his age he had been introduced into the college of Salian prieſts, and could himſelf diſcharge all the functions of that prieſthood. Being much attached to the ſtudy of Philoſophy, he honoured his teachers not only with ſtatues, but alſo with ſacrifices; and in the worſhip of the heathen gods he was ſo ſuperſtitious, that he was ſometimes ridiculed, as Julian afterwards was, for the great number of his ſacrifices; and, in common with the weakeſt of the heathens, he had great faith in omens and dreams.

* Heathen Teſtimonies, Vol. ii. p. 156.

In

In the beginning of his reign many calamities befel the empire. The Tiber overflowed, and did great damage in the city. After this followed a famine. The Parthians alſo declared war againſt the Romans, and defeated their armies. Many heathen philoſophers being by him invited to Rome, and ſupported by him, adviſed him to maintain the religion of his anceſtors, no doubt, as a neceſſary means of preſerving the empire, and providing for the ſtability of it. To this he had no averſion, and being a Stoic, and thinking it right to be inflexible in his meaſures, he iſſued rigorous edicts againſt the chriſtians, which were obeyed with ſufficient alacrity by the governors of provinces.

He does not appear to have been at all moved by ſome excellent apologies, which were preſented to him by chriſtian writers, or by thoſe which had been preſented to Adrian and Antoninus Pius; and yet he muſt have been well acquainted with chriſtians, and the principles on which they acted. The fortitude of chriſtians in bearing perſecution he mentions in his own writings, but aſcribes it to *obſtinacy;* and this he, with Pliny the younger, and many others, thought to be a ſufficient cauſe of puniſhment. Had heathens borne

torture

torture and death with the ſame fortitude, he would, no doubt, have highly commended them; but he was provoked at the ſuperiority which the chriſtians ſhewed to all other men in ſimilar circumſtances.

The apologies for chriſtians, which were preſented to this emperor, though all without effect, were thoſe of Juſtin, Tatian, Athenagoras, Appollinaris of Hierapolis, Melito of Sardis, and Theophilus of Antioch; and towards the end of his reign, appeared that of Miltiades. Some paſſages in theſe apologies I ſhall recite from the tranſlations of Dr. Lardner, as they ſhew the ſituation of chriſtians in thoſe times, and how they were affected by it.

Juſtin, after mentioning Ptolemy, and two others who were put to death by the order of Urbicus, prefect of the city, and who ſpeaks as if the perſecution was general, ſays, "Things that have happened very lately, but "a few days ago, in your city, and which "are every where done in like manner by the "preſidents without reaſon, have compelled "me to make this addreſs to you." In the courſe of it, he ſays that, "Every where, if "any Gentile was admoniſhed, or reproved "for a fault, by a father, a neighbour, a child,

"a friend,

" a friend, a brother, a huſband, or a wife, he " would preſently have his reprover before a " governor, who would be willing to inflict " death upon him*."

Athenagoras, who was probably an Athenian, tells this emperor and Commodus (for his apology was preſented at the cloſe of his reign, which ſhews that he had not relaxed of his ſeverity in the courſe of it) that all other people experienced the benefit of their equitable government; " but we chriſtians," ſays he, " becauſe no regard is had to us, nor " any proviſion made for us, though we do " no evil, and are in all things obedient to the " Divine Being, and your government, are " harraſſed and perſecuted, for the name only. " We therefore intreat you to take care of us, " that we may no longer be put to death by " ſycophants."

Melito, in a fragment of his apology preſerved by Euſebius, ſays. " Pious men are " now perſecuted and harraſſed throughout " all Aſia by new decrees, which was never " done before, and impudent ſycophants, and " ſuch as covet the poſſeſſions of others, tak- " ing occaſion from the edicts, rob without " fear or ſhame, and ceaſe not to plunder

* Heathen Teſtimonies, Vol. ii. p. 184.

" thoſe

[illegible]

"thoſe who have offended in nothing." Afterwards, "If theſe things are done by "your order, let them be thought to be well "done; for it is not reaſonable to believe "that a juſt emperor ſhould ever decree what "is unjuſt, and we ſhall chearfully bear the "reward of ſuch a death. This requeſt, how-"ever, we make to you, that you will inform "yourſelf concerning thoſe who are engaged "in this contention [i. e. the chriſtians] and "then judge whether they deſerve death and "puniſhment, or ſafety and quiet. But if "this reſolution, and new edict, which is "not fit to be enacted againſt barbarians "and enemies, proceeds not from you, as we "hope, much more would we entreat you "not to neglect us, and give us up to this "public rapine*."

It is pretty evident from this, that the emperor Marcus Antoninus iſſued new edicts againſt the chriſtians, even towards the cloſe of his reign; and though Tertullian ſays that he publiſhed no new laws againſt the chriſtians, Lardner obſerves that there might be imperial edicts publiſhed in Gaul and Aſia, with which he was not acquainted. Other critics are of the ſame opinion, and Moſheim,

* Heathen Teſtimonies, Vol. ii. p. 186.

with

with great probability, ſuppoſes that by the new edicts the accuſers and proſecutors of the chriſtians were entitled to their poſſeſſions, as a recompence for their zeal againſt them.

Notwithſtanding the above-mentioned excellent apologies, M. Aurelius, with unrelenting rigour, continued the perſecution of the chriſtians to the end of his reign, which was near twenty years; ſo that they ſuffered more under him, than under all the preceding emperors. Euſebius ſays that, in conſequence of the populace promoting the perſecution, the number of martyrs was almoſt infinite, and that he ſhould give a fuller account of them in a ſeparate treatiſe; contenting himſelf with mentioning, in his general hiſtory, a few of the more remarkable caſes, which I ſhall recite after him.

In this perſecution ſuffered the illuſtrious Polycarp, biſhop of Smyrna, who had been the companion of the apoſtle John; and Euſebius intimates, that the perſecution was violent not at Smyrna only, but in Aſia in general. Of what happened in other places we are now ignorant, but of the martyrdom of Polycarp we have an authentic account, in an epiſtle from the chriſtians at Smyrna to

their

their brethren at Philadelphia, and other places.

Before they come to the account of Polycarp, they ſpeak of other martyrs in general, and deſcribe their conſtancy in ſuffering the tortures to which they were expoſed; obſerving that the ſpectators were aſtoniſhed to ſee them ſcourged till their veins and arteries were laid bare, and even their entrails became viſible; that after this they were laid upon the ſhells of ſea fiſhes, and ſharp ſpikes fixed in the ground, and expoſed to other kinds of torture, and at laſt were thrown to the wild beaſts to be devoured. One Germanicus, being young, was adviſed by the preſident to ſpare himſelf; but he was not moved by it, and being expoſed to the wild beaſts, rather ſtimulated them, to diſpatch him the ſooner.

After this the whole multitude cried out for Polycarp to be produced. He, hearing of this, was not diſturbed, and had no intention of flying, but was prevailed upon by his friends to retire to a country houſe not far off. Here, three days before his apprehenſion, he dreamed that his pillow was in flames, which led him to ſay, that he ſhould die by fire. Being purſued, he fled to another place; but being

being traced thither, he refuſed to go any farther, ſaying, *the will of the Lord be done;* and going to thoſe who were ſent to apprehend him, he talked cheerfully with them, and ordered meat to be ſet before them, requeſting that they would permit him to pray undiſturbed for a ſingle hour.

After his prayer he was conducted to the city, and on the way Herod the Irenarch, and his father Nicetas, took him into their chariot, with a view to perſuade him to ſacrifice; but on his refuſal, they thruſt him rudely out of it, ſo that his leg was bruiſed. Recovering himſelf, he proceeded to the ſtadium with great cheerfulneſs, and being brought before the proconſul, and urged by him to revile Chriſt, he anſwered, "Fourſcore and ſix "years have I ſerved him, and he has never "done me any injury; how can I blaſpheme "my king, and my Saviour?" Being threatened with being thrown to the wild beaſts, and appearing indifferent to it, he was then threatened with fire, to which he anſwered, "You threaten me with fire which burns for "an hour, and then is extinguiſhed; but you "are ignorant of the fire of the future judg- "ment, and everlaſting puniſhment, reſerved

"for

" for the wicked; but why do you delay, ap-
" point which you pleaſe."

Proclamation then being made that Polycarp had perſiſted in profeſſing himſelf a chriſtian, many Jews and heathens of the city demanded that a lion ſhould be let looſe upon him; but Philip the Aſiarch ſaying, that this was impoſſible, as the exhibition of wild beaſts was over, they cried with one voice that he ſhould be burned alive, and all joined in bringing dry wood, the Jews eagerly aſſiſting, according to their cuſtom.

When the pile was made ready, Polycarp undreſſed himſelf, and endeavoured to pull off his ſhoes, which, on account of his great age, he had not of a long time been able to do; and when they were about to nail him to the ſtake, he ſaid, "Let me be as I am. "He that enables me to bear the fire, will "alſo enable me to remain unmoved within "the pile, without your faſtening me with "nails." They therefore only bound him, and after permitting him to pray, when he had concluded (ſaying aloud, *Amen*) fire was put to the pile; but as he did not die ſo ſoon as they expected, at the requeſt of the people, he was diſpatched with a ſword. The fleſh being

being conſumed, the chriſtians gathered his bones, and depoſited them in a proper place, the Jews having been particularly urgent that his body ſhould not be given to the chriſtians to be interred. They conclude with ſaying, that if they were permitted, they ſhould celebrate the day of his death upon the place, as his birth-day, in commemoration of ſo glorious a conteſt, and for the inſtruction of poſterity.

The authors of this epiſtle give an account of twelve other martyrs, and among them of one Metrodorus a preſbyter among the Marcionites, who was burned alive, and eſpecially of one Pionius, diſtinguiſhed for his bold confeſſion, his exhortation to others, and his conſtancy in the fire. Euſebius concludes this chapter of his work with mentioning ſeveral who ſuffered martyrdom at Pergamus, as Carpus, Papulus, and a woman of the name of Agathonica.

It was under Marcus Aurelius that Juſtin, the author of the apology mentioned above, ſuffered martyrdom, and thence acquired the title of *Martyr*, to diſtinguiſh him from other perſons of the name of Juſtin. He was originally of Samaria, and had applied himſelf to the ſtudy of philoſophy, eſpecially that of

 Plato,

[illegible]

Plato, of which he always continued to be a great admirer; but according to his own account, he was converted to chriſtianity in a private conference with ſome venerable old man. In a ſecond apology written by him, and addreſſed to Marcus Antoninus, he ſaid, he expected that ſnares would be laid for him by one Creſcens, a Cynic philoſopher, with whom he had had ſome diſpute; and this appears to have really happened. For at the accuſation of this Creſcens he was condemned to death, in the ſixth year of this emperor, A. D. 166; and it is thought that he was beheaded by the order of Ruſticus, the prefect of Rome*.

According to Juſtin, this Creſcens, though by profeſſion a philoſopher, was a very immoral man, and ſuch in general were the proſecutors of the chriſtians. Juſtin himſelf gives us an account of a martyrdom, which ſhews the innocence of the accuſed, and the malice of the accuſer. There was a man and his wife, who had both of them lived very diſſolute lives, till the woman, becoming a chriſtian, reformed her conduct, and endeavoured to reclaim her huſband; but her expoſtulations having no effect, after bearing

* Euſeb. Hiſt. Lib. iv. Cap. 16. p. 174.

with him a long time, ſhe got herſelf divorced from him. In revenge, he accuſed her of being a chriſtian, but probably not being able to get her condemned, he next accuſed one Ptolemy, by whom ſhe had been converted. Ptolemy, being aſked whether he was a chriſtian, immediately acknowledged it, and in conſequence was ordered for execution. One Lucius, ſeeing this, expoſtulated with the judge, whoſe name was Urbicus, for condemning a man who was guilty of no crime, or immorality. On this the judge aſked him if he was a chriſtian alſo, and he anſwering that he was, he was immediately ordered for execution likewiſe; as alſo were three others, who preſented themſelves in the ſame manner. So little dread, adds our hiſtorian, had the chriſtians of death, that many of them rejoiced in the proſpect of it*.

* Euſeb. Hiſt. Lib. iv. Cap. 17. p. 177.

SECTION II.

Of the Chriſtian Martyrs at Lyons and Vienne in Gaul.

THE moſt ſhocking ſcene of barbarous perſecution in this or any other reign, was exhibited at Lyons and Vienne, in Gaul, which is given by Euſebius as a ſpecimen of what was tranſacted in other places, from an authentic account written by the remaining chriſtians of the places to the churches of Aſia and Phrygia; and to give ſome idea of the ſavage rage with which this perſecution was carried on, not only with the connivance, but with the knowledge and approbation of this philoſophical emperor, I ſhall give a pretty large abridgement of this account.

The perſecution began with excluding the chriſtians from the baths, the markets, and all places of public concourſe. Then the populace inſulted them in the moſt outrageous manner, dragging them about, plundering their goods, and thereby obliging them to keep within their houſes. After this, being regularly accuſed before the magiſtrates, they

were, on their confeſſing themſelves to be chriſtians, ſent to the priſons till the arrival of a preſident of the province. Being brought before him, Vettius Epigathus deſired to be heard in their behalf; but acknowledging himſelf to be a chriſtian, he was not permitted, but was confined with the reſt; and many others joined him in an open profeſſion of their faith, though about ten perſons were ſtaggered with the proſpect of what they had to ſuffer, and renounced their religion; a circumſtance which gave the reſt more concern than the idea of what was prepared for themſelves. More, however, were ſoon added to the number of the confeſſors, and thoſe the moſt eminent chriſtians in the place.

Strict orders having been given to make enquiry into the lives and conduct of the chriſtians, ſome apoſtates were prevailed upon to accuſe them of inceſt, feeding upon human fleſh, and ſuch other abominations as public rumour had laid to their charge. After this the rage of the people, even of thoſe who before had not been ill diſpoſed towards them, was raiſed to the higheſt pitch.

They then proceeded to torture thoſe who had been apprehended, in order to make them confeſs the truth of what was laid to their

charge, eſpecially Sanctus, a deacon of Vienne, Maturus, a young convert, Attalus, a native of Pergamus, but a great pillar of the chriſtian cauſe in Gaul, and Blandina, a ſlave. For her many perſons, and eſpecially her miſtreſs, were in great pain, leſt the torture ſhould be too much for her. But ſhe bore it, in a great variety of forms, from morning to evening, to the aſtoniſhment of thoſe who applied it; and it was obſerved, that ſhe ſeemed to relieve herſelf from her agony by every now and then repeating that ſhe was a chriſtian, and that the chriſtians were innocent people.

To all the queſtions that were put to Sanctus, in order to prove the vile charges againſt himſelf and his brethren, he anſwered nothing but that he was a chriſtian. This provoked the executioners ſo much, that they applied red hot plates of iron to the tendereſt parts of his body, till he was all one wound, and had hardly the appearance of the human form. Having left him a few days in this condition, they hoped that while he was ſore, they ſhould make him more exquiſitely ſenſible to freſh tortures. But theſe being applied to him while he was dreadfully ſwelled, were obſerved to have the effect of reducing

 him

him to his former ſhape, and reſtoring him to the uſe of his limbs.

At this time one Biblias, who had renounced the faith, being produced, in order to repeat the calumnies with which ſhe had been induced to charge the chriſtians, was filled with remorſe, and openly retracted what ſhe had alleged; ſaying, how could the chriſtians eat infants, or drink their blood, when they did not even eat the blood of brute animals *. In conſequence of this, ſhe was added to the number of the martyrs.

This mode of torture not ſucceeding, many were ſhut up in noiſome dungeons, in which they were alſo tortured in their feet, and other ways, and many died of ſuffocation; but others lived in this dreadful ſituation, and comforted ſuch as were brought to them. Thoſe who expired in this confinement were chiefly the young, and the tender, who had not been accuſtomed to bear any hardſhips.

At length Pothinus, the biſhop of Lions, who was then more than ninety years old, and very infirm, was brought before the tribunal, and on his confeſſion, without any regard to

* It is evident from this circumſtance, that the chriſtians in that age thought themſelves bound by the decree of the apoſtles at Jeruſalem, not to eat blood.

his age, or weakneſs, he was inſulted in the moſt outrageous manner by the mob, who beat him with their fiſts, kicked him with their feet, and threw at him whatever came to hand, as if they were avenging the cauſe of their gods upon him.

Ten perſons, it was obſerved, had ſhrunk from the trial, and denied that they were chriſtians. Theſe, not being credited, were not allowed to have the benefit of their recantation, and being rather inſulted for their cowardice, were brought to puniſhment along with the reſt, as murderers, though not as chriſtians, on the evidence which had been produced of their eating human fleſh. Theſe went along with countenances full of ſhame and dejection, while the reſt appeared cheerful, and full of courage; ſo that the difference between them was eaſily perceived by all the by-ſtanders. After this no chriſtian who was apprehended renounced his profeſſion, but perſevered in it to the laſt.

The populace having been clamorous to have the chriſtians thrown to the wild beaſts in the amphitheatre, that favourite ſpectacle was at length provided for them on this occaſion, and Maturus, Sanctus, Blandina, and Attalus, were brought out for this purpoſe.

4 But

But before the production of the wild beaſts, Maturus and Sanctus were made to ſuffer the torture in the amphitheatre, as if it had not been applied before; and every thing that an enraged multitude called for having been tried upon them, they were at length roaſted in an iron chair, till they yielded an offenſive ſmell of burnt fleſh. Nothing, however, could by this means be got from Sanctus, beſides his former confeſſion, that he was a chriſtian; and at length an end was put to his ſufferings by death.

Blandina was then produced, and when ſhe was faſtened to a ſtake, a wild beaſt was let looſe upon her; but this alſo ſhe bore with the greateſt compoſure, and by her prayers encouraged others to bear whatever might be prepared for them; and as the wild beaſt did not meddle with her, ſhe was remanded back to priſon.

Then Attalus was loudly called for, and accordingly he was led round the amphitheatre with a board held before him, on which was inſcribed, THIS IS ATTALUS THE CHRISTIAN. But it appearing that he was a Roman citizen, the preſident remanded him to priſon, in expectation of an anſwer from the emperor, concerning him and others who were

were in the ſame predicament. In this reſpite they ſo encouraged others, who had before declined this glorious combat, as it was juſtly called, that great numbers voluntarily declared themſelves chriſtians.

The anſwer of the emperor was, that they who confeſſed they were chriſtians ſhould be put to death; but that thoſe who denied it ſhould be ſet at liberty. Upon this there was another aſſembly held, attended by a vaſt concourſe of people, before whom the confeſſors were produced; when thoſe of them who were Roman citizens were beheaded, and the reſt were thrown to the wild beaſts. But, to the aſtoniſhment of all preſent, many who had before renounced their chriſtianity, and were now produced in order to be ſet at liberty, revoked their recantation, and declaring themſelves chriſtians, ſuffered with the reſt. Theſe had been greatly encouraged ſo to do by Alexander a Phrygian, who had ſhewn himſelf particularly anxious for the perſeverance of his brethren.

At this the multitude was greatly enraged; and then he being called before the tribunal, and confeſſing himſelf to be a chriſtian, he was ſentenced to be thrown to the wild beaſts; and the day following

was

was produced in the amphitheatre for that purpoſe, together with Attalus, whom the people had inſiſted upon being brought out once more. But previous to their expoſure to the wild beaſts they were both made to bear a variety of tortures, and were at length run through with a ſword. During all this Alexander ſaid nothing, but ſhewed the greateſt firmneſs; but Attalus, when he was in the iron chair, ſaid, in alluſion to the chriſtians being charged with the murdering and eating of infants, "This, which is your own "practice, is to devour men; we neither eat "men, nor are guilty of any wickedneſs." It ſhould ſeem that the privilege of a Roman citizen, viz. that of being beheaded, without torture, was not granted to Attalus.

On the laſt day of the ſhew, Blandina was produced again, together with a young man of the name of Ponticus, about fifteen years of age, who had been every day brought to ſee the ſufferings of others. This youth being called upon to acknowledge the heathen gods, and refuſing to do it, the multitude had no compaſſion for either of them, but made them go through the whole circle of tortures, till Ponticus expired in them; and Blandina, after being ſcourged, and placed in the hot iron

chair,

chair, was put into a net, and expoſed to a bull; and after being toſſed by him ſome time, ſhe was at length diſpatched with a ſword. The ſpectators acknowledged that they had never known any woman bear torture as ſhe had done.

When this ſcene was over, the multitude continued to ſhew their rage by abuſing the dead bodies of the chriſtians. Thoſe who had been ſuffocated in priſon were thrown to the dogs, and were watched day and night, leſt any perſon ſhould bury them. The ſame was done with the bodies that were left unconſumed by fire, that had been mangled, or burned, with the ſingle heads of ſome, and the trunks of others. Even in this condition the heathens inſulted them, aſking them where was their God, and what their religion had done for them. Theſe bodies and limbs, having been expoſed in this manner for ſix days, were burned, and being reduced to aſhes were thrown into the river, to diſappoint them, as they thought, of the hope of a reſurrection. From what was done in this place, ſays Euſebius, we may judge of what was tranſacted in others.

What adds to the praiſe of theſe *martyrs* is, that, whereas that title was eſteemed a mark

of

of the higheſt honor, they would not, in the midſt of their tortures, be called by that name, ſaying it belonged to Chriſt only, or to others who had died before them. They ſaid that they were only *confeſſors*, and intreated the prayers of their brethren, that they might be able to hold out to the end. They alſo prayed for their tormenters, and did not exult over thoſe who fell*. This happened in the ſeventh year of Marcus Antoninus, A. D. 167.

SECTION III.

Of Montaniſm.

IN the nineteenth year of Antoninus Pius, A. D. 156, appeared the ſect of Montanus. He was a native of Ardaba, a village in Myſia, on the borders of Phrygia, on which account it is ſometimes called the Phrygian, or Calaphrygian hereſy†. The followers of Montanus ſoon became heretics in the original ſenſe of the word. For being excommu-

* Euſeb. Hiſt. Lib. v. Cap. 1. p. 198, &c.
† Ibid. Lib. v. Cap. 16. p. 229.

nicated

nicated by other churches, they had ſeparate aſſemblies of their own, but they held no opinions on any ſubjects of much importance, different from thoſe of other chriſtians. They only uſed greater auſterity of manners, obſerving various rules of faſting, highly commending celibacy, condemning all ſecond marriages, &c. What they are moſt to be cenſured for is their pretending to the gift of prophecy; in the ſame ſenſe in which the apoſtles were poſſeſſed of it, and to have that ſpirit which our Saviour called the *paraclete*, or *advocate*, and which he promiſed to ſend after his aſcenſion. The Montaniſts maintained that this prophecy was properly fulfilled in them; the chriſtian church not having been able, before this time, to bear ſo rigorous a diſcipline as they were appointed to introduce into it.

Inſtead of delivering themſelves, like Chriſt and the apoſtles, in connected and calm diſcourſes, Montanus and his followers were thrown into violent convulſions; and in this ſtate uttered things which their hearers ſuppoſed to be from inſpiration. But while their admirers thought it to proceed from a good ſpirit, others attributed it to a bad one *.

* Euſeb. Hiſt. Lib. v. Cap. 16. p. 239.

The

The idea of the peculiar excellence of auſterity and mortification did not begin with the Montaniſts. For in this they only followed Tatian, whoſe diſciples, from this circumſtance, obtained the appellation of *Encratites*, voluntarily abſtaining from whatever was thought unneceſſarily to gratify the corporeal appetites, as fleſh meat and wine, even in the celebration of the Euchariſt, and objecting alſo to marriage. Theſe notions Tatian probably got from the Valentinian Gnoſtics, to whoſe doctrine he was in ſome meaſure addicted; and all the Gnoſtics profeſſed to hold in contempt every thing of a corporeal nature. Tatian was ſucceeded by Severus, and from him the Encratites were ſometimes called Severians*.

Tatian taught his principles firſt in Meſopatamia, but they prevailed moſt in Antioch, and thence they paſſed into Cilicia and Piſidia; and as this was prior to the time of Montanus, there can be little doubt but that he was one of theſe Encratites. According to Epiphanius, this ſect was formed in the twelfth year of Antoninus Pius, and was eſtabliſhed in a part of Phrygia, of which Montanus was a native †.

* Euſeb. Hiſt. Lib. iv. Cap. 29. p. 193.

† Hær. 45. Sect. i. p. 391. Hær. 46. Sect. i. p. 399.

That

That perſons of Montanus's turn of thinking ſhould miſtake the natural emotions of their own minds for divine impulſes, is not at all extraordinary. This we ſee to have been the caſe with perſons of all religions, heathens, mahometans, and chriſtians. We find even at this day how unwilling men of good ſenſe in other reſpects are to give up all idea of ſupernatural aſſiſtance, or of inviſible miracles, ſuch as are incapable of any proper proof, eſpecially upon extraordinary occaſions. When they ſee men make great exertions, either in doing or ſuffering, they are apt to imagine that they have the aid of more power than their own. They are even apt to think ſo with reſpect to themſelves. The early chriſtians nad this idea with reſpect to the power of bearing torture in martyrdom, whereas the natural powers of man, and the principles of chriſtianity, will appear to thoſe who conſider the force of them abundantly ſufficient for all that we read of men having borne or done in thoſe circumſtances.

The opinion of the natural weakneſs of the human mind, and of the neceſſity of foreign aid, to produce any thing great or good, is the foundation of all that enthuſiaſm which, in all ages, and to this very day, has been the diſgrace of chriſtianity. The whole of the Calviniſtic

viniſtic doctrine of the *new birth*, or as it is called, the work of God in the ſoul of man, is built upon it. It was, in fact, the ſame ignorance of the powers of nature, and the idea of the perpetual interference of ſuperior powers, in all the affairs of men, which laid the foundation of the whole ſyſtem of Paganiſm. Hence the perſuaſion of the influence of the ſun, moon, and ſtars, in all events, and then that of dead men in the concerns of the living; and hence all the ſtrange rites and ceremonies which have ever been imagined to be proper to gain the favour of thoſe imaginary powers.

Where there is this ignorance of nature and of true philoſophy, pretences to inſpiration will eaſily gain credit. Thus the violent agitations of the Heathen prieſts, and the ſimilar ones of the Montaniſts, of the French prophets, and of the early Quakers, contributed to produce the perſuaſion of their being under ſome ſupernatural impulſe; and the ſame is generally thought in the Eaſt to be the cauſe of the ravings of madmen.

Farther, as men are apt to admire what they find difficult to practice, auſtery of manners and rigour of diſcipline, have always been popular. This we ſee in other religions be-

ſides the chriſtian, as in the caſe of the Fakirs of Indoſtan, and the Dervizes among the Mahometans. This it was that chiefly recommended the Novatians, who borrowed much from the Montaniſts. It has alſo been the chief recommendation of the Monaſtic diſcipline, and eſpecially the more rigorous kinds of it.

The principal followers of Montanus were two women of fortune, Priſcilla and Maximilla, and alſo Quintilla mentioned by Epiphanius, who all pretended to the gift of prophecy; but though Maximilla foretold the approach of wars and tumults, it was obſerved that nothing of that kind happened from the time of her death till thirteen years after.

Theſe two women were ſaid to have been married, but to have divorced themſelves from their huſbands when they appeared as propheteſſes, and this they are ſaid to have encouraged in others who were diſpoſed to join them*. They were both natives of Pepuſa in Phrygia, and they called this place, and alſo Tymium, by the name of Jeruſalem; as if that was to be the centre of a new and purer mode of worſhip, and the place where

* Euſeb. Hiſt. Lib. v. Cap. 18. p. 233.

the

the chriſtians were to wait for the deſcent of the ſpirit. From the place of the nativity of theſe women, the Montaniſts were ſometimes called Pepuſians *.

This ſect ſpread chiefly in Aſia Minor, where it aroſe, and in Thyatira there was hardly any other chriſtianity profeſſed †; but it extended itſelf alſo to other places, and ſome very diſtant ones, eſpecially Africa, where it was embraced by the celebrated Tertullian. Montanus had ſeveral other followers of eminence beſides theſe, eſpecially Alcibiades and Theodotus ‡.

When the extravagancies of the Montaniſts ſpread, as they ſoon did, into diſtant countries, they were ſtrenuouſly oppoſed by the more ſober part of the chriſtian world. among others Sotas biſhop of Anchialus in Thrace, taking it for granted that it was an evil ſpirit that had got poſſeſſion of Priſcilla, endeavoured to exorciſe her, and in conjunction with other biſhops excommunicated her §.

* Euſeb. Hiſt. Lib. v. Cap. 18. p. 234.
† Epiphanii, Hær. 51. Sec. 33. Opera Vol. i. p. 455.
‡ Euſeb Hiſt. Lib. v. Cap. 3. p. 212.
§ Ibid. Lib. v. Cap. 19 p. 237. Epiph. Hær. 48. Opera Vol. i. p. 402.

Several ſynods, or councils, were alſo held in Aſia Minor, eſpecially one at Iconium, in which Firmilian preſided, in which the Montaniſts were excommunicated, and the baptiſm adminiſtered by them declared to be null*. On this they formed ſeparate ſocieties, calling themſelves the *ſpiritual*, and other chriſtians *carnal*. It is ſaid that Victor biſhop of Rome, for ſome time favoured them, and received them into his communion. Their churches were ſmall, but numerous, and they ſoon divided into a great variety of ſects; which cannot be wondered at, conſidering the principle on which they ſeparated from other chriſtians. Pretenſions to inſpiration being incapable of proof would be various and diſcordant; and they who profeſſed to be guided by a divine ſpirit, would not yield to the controul of their brethren.

By the enemies of the Montaniſts many things were laid to their charge, which, being the reverſe of their general principles and maxims, we cannot ſuppoſe to have had any foundation in truth, ſuch as the ſtudious ornamenting of their perſons, playing at dice, the love of money, &c†. I only mention theſe

* Cypriani, Epiſt. 75. p. 226.
† Euſeb. Hiſt. Lib. v. Cap. 18. p. 235.

things to ſhew what abſurd calumnies were raiſed, propagated, and believed, concerning perſons who, on other accounts, had made themſelves obnoxious, and with what allowance we ſhould read what Euſebius and other ancient writers ſay of the Gnoſtics, the Ebionites, the Unitarians in general, the Manichæans, &c. and what was afterwards ſaid of the Arians and others.

With reſpect to the doctrines which then began to divide the chriſtian world relating to the perſon of Chriſt, the Montaniſts, held nothing that was peculiar to themſelves; but many of them, as well as other chriſtians in that age, were Unitarians. Such was Praxeas, againſt whom Tertullian wrote, and there were ſo many others of them who retained the Unitarian doctrine, that by later writers the Montaniſts in general are ſometimes charged with profeſſing it. But the Montaniſts do not appear to have had many perſons of learning among them; and as to the unlearned, and the common people, it is evident, from the acknowledgment of Tertullian and others, that in this age, and to a much later period, they were almoſt univerſally Unitarians. According to the author of the Appen-

dix to Tertullian's treatiſe *De preſcriptione*, they were only thoſe Montaniſts who followed Eſchines who were Unitarians, while they who followed Proclus were of a different opinion *. For theſe perſons diſtinguiſhed themſelves as leaders among the Montaniſts, and were at the head of what may be called ſeparate ſchools. Eſchines was the earlier of the two.

Some of the Montaniſts diſtinguiſhed themſelves as writers. Among them were Priſcilla and Maximilla, whoſe writings were conſidered in as high a degree as the ſcriptures themſelves. What Tertullian has written concerning the human ſoul, in his treatiſe on that ſubject, is chiefly derived from the ſuppoſed revelations in their books. No writer, however, contributed ſo much to increaſe the reputation, and the number, of the Montaniſts, as Tertullian himſelf, though none of his works that are now extant contain a regular defence of their principles. Patroclus wrote in defence of Montaniſm, but his treatiſe is not now extant.

The writers againſt the Montaniſts were chiefly Apollinaris of Hierapolis, Miltiades of Athens, Serapion of Antioch, and Caius

* Sect. 52. p. 223.

who

who anſwered Patroclus*. To theſe Jerom adds Rhodon a diſciple of Tatian. But as Euſebius gives a pretty large account of his writings, and makes no mention of any ſuch treatiſe of his, it is not very probable that he wrote any thing on the ſubject.

It does not appear that this ſect met with any particular oppoſition in Africa; but it was ſoon loſt in that of the Novatians, and afterwards that of the Donatiſts. It appears indeed to have been on the decline ſoon after the time of Tertullian, and we find no mention of it after the fifth century. I have therefore choſen to given all that I have found to ſay about it in this one place.

SECTION IV.

Of the Origin of the Doctrine of the Trinity.

THE period of which I am now treating will be for ever noted for the introduction of a doctrine which led to that of *the Trinity*, as it is now held in all eſtabliſhed

* Theod. Hær. Fab. Lib. iii. Cap. ii. Opera Vol. iv. p. 227.

chriſtian churches, and which may juſtly be called the greateſt of all the corruptions of chriſtianity, as it infringes upon that fundamental and moſt important of all doctrines, the unity of God, in the perſon of the ſupreme Father. This was the work of the Platonic philoſophers, who when they embraced chriſtianity retained much of their former tenets; and the rather, as, in their opinion, theſe doctrines contributed to enhance the dignity of the head of their new religion, ſo that he might with propriety be denominated *God*, as well as *man*. And the greateſt objection to the chriſtian religion in all the early ages was the meanneſs of its founder, viz. a crucified malefactor.

According to Plato, there are three *principles* (ἀρχαι) as he termed them, in the univerſe, *The good*, or the ſupreme mind, the νους, his *intellect*, or *ideas*, and ψυχη, or the *ſoul of the world*. The ſecond of theſe principles, Philo, the learned Jew of Alexandria, called *logos*, a term borrowed from the ſcriptures, in conſequence of its being there ſaid, that the world was made by the *word*, or *logos*; of God, as Plato had made his (νους) *ideas*, or *intelligible world*, to be the immediate ſource, or cauſe, of the viſible univerſe. In the application of

theſe principles to the Jewiſh religion, the logos, that power or principle from which the univerſe originated, was thought to be ſomething emitted from the ſupreme mind, and capable of being drawn into it again, as a ray of light was then conceived to be with reſpect to the ſun. This divine ray, or emanation, was ſuppoſed not only to have made the world, but alſo to have appeared to the patriarchs, to have delivered the law from mount Sinai, and to have been that bright cloud, or glory, which had been the ſymbol of the divine preſence in the tabernacle and the temple.

To this doctrine the platonizing chriſtians added, that this divine ray, or logos, was permanently attached to the perſon of Jeſus Chriſt; and this emanation being of the eſſence of God, Chriſt, they ſaid, might, on this account, be properly called *God*. According to theſe philoſophizing chriſtians, therefore, the whole perſon of Chriſt conſiſted of three parts, viz. a body, a proper human ſoul, and alſo this divine uncreated logos; ſo that he was both God and man. But then, as the logos was only ſuppoſed to be ſomething emitted from the ſupreme mind, juſt as a ray of light is from the ſun, they were always careful

careful to ſpeak of Chriſt as a being, who, though he was properly *divine*, was, nevertheleſs, far inferior to the Father, as a beam of light is to the ſun. And they were the more careful to do this, that they might not give too much offence to the great body of chriſtians, who were juſtly alarmed at a notion which looked ſo like a violation of the greateſt doctrine of all revelation, that of the *unity of God*.

This opinion, of *a divine ray*, called the *logos*, being permanently attached to the man Jeſus, and conſtituting a proper part of his perſon, appears firſt in the writings of Juſtin Martyr, who had been a Platonic philoſopher, and who, when he became a chriſtian, continued to be a great admirer of Plato. Afterwards, many other learned chriſtians, eſpecially thoſe who were educated at Alexandria, where the Platonic philoſophy was principally taught, adopted the ſame notion; and by this means they diſtinguiſhed themſelves from the unlearned chriſtians, as holding a more *ſublime* doctrine than *they* were capable of comprehending. The doctrine of the ſimple humanity of Chriſt they conſidered as *milk fit for babes;* but that of the divinity, as *meat for ſtrong men*. This was the conſtant

language

language of the learned chriſtians for many ages.

It is evident, however, that the new doctrine, though thus qualified, and ingeniouſly explained, gave much offence to the great body of unlearned chriſtians; and even many of the moſt diſtinguiſhed for their learning, in every period, proteſted againſt it. But at length they were overborne by the majority of the learned biſhops and clergy, and by them this ſyſtem was in time ſo far improved, or rather changed, that Chriſt was aſſerted to be, in all reſpects, equal to God his Father.

Juſtin Martyr himſelf, when he firſt advanced his opinion, did it with great diffidence, without the leaſt cenſure of thoſe who thought differently from him, and even with the air of an apology, as for ſomething that he was apprehenſive might give offence. "It will not follow," ſays he*, "that he is "not the Chriſt, though I ſhould not be able "to prove that he pre-exiſted as God, the ſon "of him that made all things, and that he "became a man by the virgin. It is proved "that he is the Chriſt, the ſon of God, who-"ever he was, though I ſhould not prove that "he pre-exiſted, but was a man of the ſame

* Dial. p. 233.

"paſſions

"paſſions with ourſelves, having fleſh, and "being ſubject to his Father's will. It will "be right to ſay, that in this only I have been "miſtaken, and not that he is not the Chriſt, "though he ſhould appear to be a man, born "as other men are, and to be made Chriſt by "election. For there are ſome of our race" (meaning probably the Gentile chriſtians, for all the Jewiſh chriſtians are well known to have held this opinion) "that he was a man "born like other men. With them I do not "agree, nor ſhould I do ſo, though ever ſo "many, being of the ſame opinion, ſhould "urge it upon me, becauſe we are com-"manded by Chriſt himſelf, not to obey the "teachings of men, but what was taught by "the holy prophets and himſelf."

It is plain that, according to the unitarian doctrine, to which Juſtin here alludes, Jeſus was the ſon of Joſeph, as well as of Mary. It is therefore probable, that this was the opinion of the unitarians, that is, of the chriſtians in general, at this time; and that the doctrine of the miraculous conception, as well as thoſe of the pre-exiſtence and divinity of Chriſt, aroſe about the ſame period.

Trypho, in his reply to Juſtin, gives a decided preference to this doctrine of the pro-

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per humanity of Chriſt, without a miraculous conception, to any other. "They," ſays he*, "who ſay that he was a man, born like "other men, and that he became Chriſt by "election" (that is, by the appointment of God) "ſeem to hold a doctrine more credible "than yours. For all of us expect that "Chriſt will be a man, and that Elias will "come to anoint him. If, therefore, this "perſon be the Chriſt, he muſt by all means "be a man, born like other men."

The compariſon of the deity to the ſun, and of his energies to the rays of light, emitted from him, and drawn into him again, had unfortunately been adopted before Juſtin Martyr, by ſome who were properly unitarians. A divine ray of this kind they ſuppoſed was emitted at the creation. The ſame, they ſaid, was the glory which appeared to Moſes, and the patriarchs, and to have conſtituted thoſe appearances which are denominated angels. A ray of this kind they ſuppoſed likewiſe to reſide in Jeſus Chriſt, and that by this he worked miracles while he was upon earth, but that it was withdrawn from him when he aſcended into heaven. Some of them might go ſo far as to ſay, that ſince

* Dial. p. 233.

this

this ray was properly *divine*, and the divinity of the Father, Chriſt, who had this divine ray within him, might be called *God*, but by no means God different from the Father. They are moreover charged with ſaying, that the Father, being in Chriſt, ſuffered and died in him alſo, and from this they got the name of *Patripaſſians*. But Beauſobre, with great probability, ſuppoſes that this was only what their adverſaries charged them with, as the neceſſary conſequence of their opinions. It is not, indeed, certain, ſince none of their own writings are extant, that they ever, in any ſenſe, called Chriſt God. Their ſaying that this divine ray was in Chriſt, was nothing more than expreſſing, in the philoſophical language of the times, that the preſence and power of God the Father was with Chriſt, and that this power, and not any proper power of his own, was that which worked the miracles. Juſtin Martyr, who mentions this opinion*, ſays nothing of thoſe who held it, calling Chriſt God, and much leſs of their maintaining that God ſuffered.

This opinion, however, of the divine power, or energy, which was in Chriſt, being only a divine ray emitted from the Supreme

* Dial. p. 412.

Being

Being, and drawn into him again, Juſtin diſapproved; ſuppoſing that after it was attached to the perſon of Chriſt, it was never withdrawn from him. He would not, however, ſay that this divine ray, though permanently attached to Chriſt, and making an eſſential part of his perſon, was ever properly ſeparated from its ſource, and in this conſiſts the abſurdity of the new doctrine. This opinion of his he illuſtrates by two compariſons; the one that of *ſpeech*, or *logos*, which was the more convenient for his purpoſe, as this was the very term made uſe of by Philo to denote this divine ray by which the worlds were made. As ſpeech, conveying a *meaning*, ſays he, goes forth from one man and enters into others, by which they comprehend his meaning, while the ſame meaning ſtill remains in the perſon who ſpeaks, ſo the logos of the Father continues entire in himſelf, though it be imparted to Chriſt.

He alſo illuſtrates this transferring of divinity from the Father to the Son by one lamp lighting others, without loſing any of its ſplendour.

The natural inference from both theſe compariſons would be, that divine beings were *multiplied*, becauſe a lamp, though lighted by another,

another, is a perfectly diſtinct lamp; and *ſpeech* alſo, or *meaning*, communicated to another perſon, is numerically different from that which remains in him who communicated it, and they continue independent of each other. But Juſtin and his followers were careful not to purſue this compariſon ſo far; and they all maintained that ſpeech, or meaning, though transferred to another, was ſtill the identical *ſame* meaning that was in the other; and that the light of the ſecond lamp was not *another*, but the very ſame light with that of the firſt. By this ſubtle diſtinction they thought to avoid the charge of making more gods than one, which no believer in divine revelation would bear. On the other hand, the philoſophical Unitarians admitted of no diſtinction, or difference whatever, between the divinity of the Father and that which was in the Son; ſo that their adverſaries always charged them with *confounding* the perſons of the Father and the Son, as the Arians were charged with *ſeparating* them.

That Juſtin Martyr's doctrine of the divinity of Chriſt was little known at the time that he wrote, is pretty evident from the conſideration of another production of the ſame age, which, with reſpect to ingenuity

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and information, is not inferior to any of the writings of thoſe who are uſually called the Fathers. I mean the *Clementine Homilies*, which is properly a theological romance, in which the writer perſonates Clemens, afterwards biſhop of Rome; and in an account of his travels, and thoſe of Peter and Simon Magus, intermixed with a variety of other incidents, he introduces all the theological knowledge of the times. The author of this work not only appears to be an unitarian himſelf, and of courſe repreſents Peter and Clemens as ſuch, but he never ſo much as mentions ſuch an opinion as that of Juſtin Martyr, though he had the faireſt opportunity of doing it.

When he introduces Simon diſputing with Peter on the plurality of Gods, one ſupreme and the reſt ſubordinate, and urging as an *argument ad hominem*, that this kind of plurality may be proved even from the ſcriptures, as from God ſaying, *Let us make man;* Peter replies, that in this "God ſpake to his own "wiſdom, which is his ſpirit, united as a ſoul "to God*;" that is, he ſpake *to himſelf*; whereas Juſtin Martyr, and all the advocates of Chriſt being the logos, would have ſaid

* Hom. xvi. Sect. 12. p. 727.

 that

that this ſpeech was addreſſed to the logos, or Chriſt.

Juſtin and his followers vindicated the propriety of Chriſt being called *God*, as he was the uncreated logos of the Father; but in this work Peter ſays, " To us there is one " God, who made all things, and governs all " things, whoſe ſon Chriſt is." Again " Our " Lord never ſaid that there was any other " God beſides him that made all things; " nor did he ever call himſelf *God*, but pro" nounced him bleſſed who called him the " Son of God*." This was in anſwer to Simon, who had ſaid that, according to the rule laid down by Moſes, Chriſt ought to have been rejected, either as a falſe prophet, or another God.

In this work it is likewiſe alleged as an argument, why a being produced even from the ſubſtance of God by way of generation (for ſuch, according to the philoſophy of the times, was the origin of all *ſouls*, both of men and angels) ought not therefore to be called *God*, that " he who is not, in all reſpects, the " ſame with any other, cannot be entitled to " the ſame appellation. It is the property of " the Father to beget, and of the Son to be

* Hom. xvi. Sect. 15. p. 728.

" begotten.

" begotten. But that which is begotten can-
" not be compared with that which is unbe-
" gotten, or ſelf-begotten." This is the very reverſe of the doctrine of Juſtin Martyr and his followers, who obtained the name of orthodox. For they maintained the propriety of calling Chriſt God, becauſe he was begotten, or produced from the ſubſtance of the Father, though inferior to him; *God of God, light of light*, as it is expreſſed in the Nicene creed.

Let any perſon now judge, whether the author of this curious work could have written in this manner, on maxims ſo diametrically oppoſite to thoſe of the ſuppoſed ſtandard orthodoxy of his times, without at leaſt making ſome mention of them, or alluding to them. It is therefore almoſt certain that this writer had never heard of ſuch a notion as that of Juſtin, and that this was the reaſon why he took no notice of it.

SECTION V.

Of the State of the Jews in this Period, and the ſubſequent ones, collected chiefly from Baſnage's Hiſtory of them.

AFTER the deſtruction of Jeruſalem, the Jews were governed by *Patriarchs*, the firſt of which that is known to us lived in the time of Adrian. He was deſcended from Hillel, who lived in the time of our Saviour; and this dignity continued in his family till the year 429. His reſidence was at Tiberias, where the Jews had an academy for the ſtudy of their law.

This patriarch had under him ſeveral officers, ſome of whom are alſo called *patriarchs* in the laws of the Roman empire; but their juriſdiction was confined to particular places, and they were ſent out by the principal patriarch as the occaſions of his government required, eſpecially to collect the tribute which every ſynagogue paid him. This was exacted with ſo much rigour, that complaints were ſometimes made of it to the Roman emperors. The patriarch had likewiſe the

nomination of the rulers of ſynagogues, and the power of erecting new ſynagogues, as well as that of deciding all differences relating to the interpretation of the law. This power of erecting new ſynagogues was forbidden by the emperor Theodoſius II. as was alſo the converting of any perſon to the Jewiſh religion.

The firſt of theſe patriarchs, of whom we have any account, and probably the firſt that was created, was Gamaliel II. in the time of Nerva; the ſecond was Simeon III. in the time of Adrian; and he was ſucceeded by his ſon, the famous Judah Hakkadoſh, or *the holy*, who lived in the reigns of Antoninus Pius, Marcus Aurelius, and Commodus. He was born on the ſame day that Akiba, a famous Jewiſh Rabbi, died, which was in the reign of Adrian; and he diſtinguiſhed himſelf by a collection of the deciſions of the ancient Jewiſh doctors, or a compilation of a body of the Jewiſh canon and civil law, called the *Miſhna*, probably about the year 180.

Hillel II. a deſcendant of Judah Hakkadoſh, was the author of the Jewiſh æra of the creation of the world, the year 3716 of which correſponds to the firſt of the chriſtian æra. He alſo compoſed the Jewiſh cycle, to re-

duce the courſe of the ſun to that of the moon, by means of ſeven intercalations. This Hillel governed the Jewiſh nation till about the year 385; and the laſt of theſe patriarchs was Gamaliel, mentioned by Jerom about A. D. 392. This dignity was aboliſhed A. D. 429, after it had ſubſiſted three hundred and fifty years.

To theſe patriarchs ſucceeded *Primates*, who were elected by the Jews, one in each province; but Theodoſius the younger ordered the contributions which were made for their ſupport, and which were the ſame that had been granted to the patriarchs, to be paid into the public treaſury.

About the ſame time that the Weſtern Jews were governed by patriarchs, who reſided at Tiberias, the Eaſtern Jews were governed by a perſon who was ſtiled *the Prince of the Captivity*, at Babylon. The firſt of theſe was Huna, who was cotemporary with Judah Hakkadoſh, and was choſen prince of the nation, A. D. 220 or 222.

The Miſhna of Judah Hakkadoſh being imperfect, its defects were remedied by Jochanan, aſſiſted by Rab and Samuel, two of his diſciples, and they called their work *Gemara*; and this, added to the Miſhna, makes what

what is called the *Talmud of Jeruſalem*. The defects of this work, R. Aſe, who had a ſchool at Sora, near Babylon, endeavoured to remove in another commentary on the Miſhna of Judah; and his commentary, or *Gemara*, together with the Miſhna, makes the *Talmud of Babylon*, which is generally ſuppoſed to have been completed about A. D. 500, or 505. This Talmud the Jews afterwards held in ſuch high eſteem, that they even preferred it to the ſcriptures; comparing the latter to water, and the former to wine. "He "that offends againſt the law of Moſes," they ſay, "may be pardoned; but he who offends "againſt the deciſions of their doctors, is de"ſerving of death."

It is remarkable, that about the time that the doctrine of the trinity came to be generally profeſſed by learned chriſtians, we read of few or no converts to chriſtianity from the Jews; and, no doubt, the teaching of ſuch a doctrine as this, ſo repugnant to the moſt fundamental principles of their religion, muſt have contributed not a little to this effect. But, indeed, from this time the learned chriſtians appear to have had little intercourſe with the Jews, hardly any of them taking the pains even to learn Hebrew; and the ſame in

general has been the caſe with the Jews and chriſtians to the preſent day.

It is hoped, however, that when the Jews ſhall fully underſtand that the doctrine of the trinity, which gives them ſuch great and juſt offence, is rejected by learned and well informed chriſtians, ſo as to be convinced that it is unqueſtionably a corruption of genuine chriſtianity, they will give more attention than they have hitherto done to the hiſtorical evidences of chriſtianity; and whenever they do this, they muſt perceive that they are even ſtronger and clearer than thoſe which they can allege for the divine miſſion of Moſes. They will alſo ſee, if they read the New Teſtament for themſelves, and judge of it without prejudice, that there is no contrariety or oppoſition between the two religions; ſince, whenever they become chriſtians, they are to continue ſubject to their peculiar laws and ritual, as Chriſt and the apoſtles, who were alſo Jews, did; and that, as Jews, there is reſerved for them a permanent eſtabliſhment in their own country, where they are to be the moſt diſtinguiſhed nation upon earth. For ſuch is the neceſſary interpretation of all the ancient prophecies,

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SECTION VI.

Of the Writers within this Period.

I Shall now give a ſhort account of the chriſtian writers within this period, nearly in the order in which they are mentioned by Euſebius. The firſt of them is *Hegeſippus*, whom indeed he places in the time of Adrian *. He was a Jew, and the author of an eccleſiaſtical hiſtory, or a continuation of the book of Acts, written in a very plain ſtile. It is unfortunately loſt, and is by ſome thought to have been neglected on account of its containing ſome things that were too favourable to the unitarian doctrine.

Beſides Hegeſippus there were three other Jewiſh chriſtian writers in this period, viz. Aquila, Theodotion, and Symmachus, all of whom diſtinguiſhed themſelves by their tranſlations of the Hebrew ſcriptures into Greek. and I chuſe to mention them all together, though the laſt of them more properly belongs to the next period. Aquila is ſaid to have flouriſhed A. D. 130, Theodotion in

* Euſeb. Hiſt. Lib. iv. Cap. 8. p. 150.

180,

180, and Symmachus 200. Their verſions are quoted with great reſpect by all chriſtian writers, eſpecially that of Symmachus, though they are not now extant, except that of Daniel by Theodotion, which is that which has been generally adopted inſtead of the LXX. which has been diſcovered very lately.

Symmachus wrote a commentary on the goſpel of Matthew, in which he endeavoured to diſprove the opinion of the miraculous conception of Jeſus*. Aquila alſo and Theodotion, as well as the Jewiſh chriſtians in general, were probably unbelievers in that part of the common goſpel hiſtory, as Euſebius ſays of them, that "they were Jewiſh "proſelytes, whom the Ebionites following "believe Chriſt to be the ſon of Joſeph†."

In the reign of Adrian was Agrippa ſurnamed Caſtor. He wrote againſt Baſilides the Gnoſtic‡.

Juſtin Martyr, beſides his two apologies for chriſtianity, mentioned before, and his dialogue with Trypho the Jew, proving the truth of the chriſtian religion on the principles of Judaiſm, wrote alſo a treatiſe of monarchy,

* Euſeb. Hiſt. Lib. vi. Cap. 17. p. 278.
† Ibid. Lib. v. Cap. 8. p. 221.
‡ Ibid. Lib. iv. Cap. 7. p. 148.

proving

proving againſt the heathens the unity of God, the ſecond part of which is ſtill extant. He alſo wrote another treatiſe againſt the Gentiles, another on hereſies, another on the ſoul, and a book intitled Pſaltes, but they have not come down to us*.

Dionyſius, biſhop of Corinth, wrote epiſtles to ſeveral of the chriſtian churches, inculcating good morals, and guarding them againſt hereſy, that is, Gnoſticiſm. He particularly commends the chriſtians at Rome for the aſſiſtance they gave to thoſe who ſuffered for their religion. He complained of ſome of his epiſtles being corrupted†.

One of the epiſtles of Dionyſius was addreſſed to Pinytus a biſhop in Crete, adviſing him not to impoſe on the brethren the yoke of celibacy. To this Penytus wrote in anſwer, that we muſt not always be giving milk as to babes, but ſometimes meat to ſtrong men‡. In this we ſee the progreſs of ſuperſtition, and the ſecret influence of thoſe principles which were the foundation of Gnoſticiſm, and of the doctrine of the Encratites. Neither the epiſtle of Pinytus, nor any of thoſe of Dionyſius are extant.

* Euſeb. Hiſt. Lib. iv. Cap. 18. p. 179.
† Ibid. Lib. iv. Cap. 23. p. 185.
‡ Ibid. Lib. iv. Cap. 23. p. 186.

Of

Of Theophilus biſhop of Antioch, the ſeventh from the apoſtles, there are now extant three books addreſſed to Autolycus, againſt the heathen religion. He alſo wrote againſt the hereſy of Hermogenes, a Gnoſtic, and alſo againſt Marcion *. He is the firſt writer who uſes the word *Trinity*.

Philip, biſhop of Gortyne in Crete, and alſo Modeſtus, wrote againſt Marcion †.

Melito, biſhop of Sardis, was a pretty voluminous writer; but nothing of his is come down to us, except a few fragments preſerved by Euſebius. He wrote a treatiſe on Eaſter, of the rule of life, of the lives of the prophets, of the church, of the Lord's day, of the natural formation of man, of the ſubjection of the ſenſes to faith, of the ſoul, body, and mind, of baptiſm, of truth, of the creation and generation of Chriſt, of prophecy, of hoſpitality, a book intitled the key, of the devil, of the revelation of John, of the corporality of God, which he is ſaid to have maintained; and an apology for chriſtianity, addreſſed to the emperor Marcus Antoninus, of which an extract has been given. In one of his works, Melito gave a catalogue of all

* Euſeb. Hiſt. Lib. iv. Cap. 24. p. 187.
† Ibid. Lib. iv. Cap. 25. p. 188.

the

the canonical books of the Old Teſtament, which is preſerved by Euſebius. It contains none of thoſe that we call apocryphal *.

Apollinaris, biſhop of Hierapolis, wrote an apology for chriſtianity addreſſed to Marcus Antoninus, a treatiſe againſt the Gentiles, on truth, againſt the Jews, and againſt the Montaniſts †.

Tatian was a great admirer of Juſtin Martyr, but after his death he adopted ſome opinions of the Gnoſtics, which ſavoured of too great auſterity, enjoining abſtinence from animal food, and alſo from marriage. His followers, called Encratites, are alſo ſaid to have had an averſion to the apoſtle Paul and his writings. Tatian wrote a harmony of the goſpels, and many other works, the titles of which are now loſt. All that we have of his works in his treatiſe againſt the Gentiles, and this was the moſt admired of all his writings ‡.

Muſanus, of whom we know nothing beſides the name, wrote againſt the Encratites §, but the work is not now extant.

* Euſeb. Hiſt. Lib. iv. Cap. 26. p. 191.
† Ibid. Lib. iv. Cap. 27. p. 191.
‡ Ibid. Lib. iv. Cap. 29. p. 193.
§ Ibid. Lib. iv. Cap. 28. p. 192.

Barde-

Bardeſanes, who wrote in the Syraic language, was the author of ſeveral works, all of which are now loſt. One againſt Marcion, another concerning fate, and a treatiſe relating to perſecution. He had been at firſt a follower of Valentinus, and according to Euſebius always retained ſomething of his ſentiments *.

Irenæus, biſhop of Lions, was a diſciple of Polycarp, when he was very old, and alſo of Papias. We have in a Latin tranſlation, a large treatiſe of his againſt hereſy, with many fragments of the original Greek. It relates almoſt wholly to the Gnoſtics, though he occaſionally and very ſeverely animadverts on the Ebionites, or Jewiſh chriſtians, for not admitting any divinity in Chriſt. He alſo wrote ſeveral epiſtles, one to Blaſtus concerning ſchiſm, another to Florinus concerning monarchy, to prove that God is not the author of evil, and another to the ſame concerning the Ogdoad of Valentinus †.

Athenagoras, an Athenian and a philoſopher, is the author of an Apology for the Chriſtians, addreſſed to Marcus Aurelius and Commodus, and alſo of a Treatiſe on the Reſurrection,

* Euſeb. Hiſt. Lib. iv. Cap. 30. p. 195.
† Ibid. Lib. v. Cap. 20. p. 237.

ſurrection, both now extant, though he is not mentioned by Euſebius or Jerom.

Rhodon a native of Aſia, but educated at Rome under Tatian, wrote againſt the diſciples of Marcion, who were then divided into ſeveral ſects. He alſo wrote a treatiſe on the work of the ſix days *. Jerom ſays, he alſo wrote againſt the Montaniſts, but in this he is thought to be miſtaken. Nothing is extant of his beſides ſome extracts preſerved in Euſebius.

To this liſt of writers I muſt add the unknown author of the preſent *Sibylline verſes*, which were probably compoſed at different times, and the laſt additions to them allude to the emperor Marcus Aurelius. They are firſt quoted by Juſtin Martyr, and what is not a little extraordinary, they were received by him, and the chriſtian writers in general, as the genuine prophetic verſes, or oracles, of thoſe women who went by the name of *Sibyls*; whereas nothing can be more evident than that they are the work of ſome chriſtian, who, from ſome very wrong motive, endeavoured to avail himſelf of the credit they had obtained for the ſervice of chriſtianity, which ſtands in no need of ſuch ſupports.

* Euſeb. Hiſt. Lib. vii. Cap. 13. p. 225.

PERIOD IV.

FROM THE REIGN OF COMMODUS, A.D. 180, TO THAT OF DECIUS, A. D. 249.

SECTION I.

The general Hiſtory of this Period.

COMMODUS, who had neither the underſtanding, nor the bigotry, of his father, did not intereſt himſelf in the affairs of the Chriſtians, any more than in thoſe of the empire in general, but abandoned himſelf to the moſt brutal pleaſures. In conſequence of this the chriſtian church in general had peace, and increaſed greatly, and many perſons of rank and fortune joined the chriſtians. We have, however, one example of a martyrdom in this reign at Rome, and there may have been many others, of which we have no account, in other parts of the empire.

Apollonius, a Roman ſenator, a man of letters, and attached to the ſtudy of philoſophy, was

was accuſed by his own ſlave, a man of bad character, of being a chriſtian; and being brought before Perennis, the prefect of the Prætorian guards, he was by him referred to the ſenate, of which he was a member. But though he there made an excellent oration in defence of his faith, he was condemned to die; the law which ordained that a perſon confeſſing himſelf to be a chriſtian ſhould be put to death ſtill remaining in force. The accuſer, however, was ſentenced to have his legs broken, having been guilty, as Euſebius ſays, of a capital crime *.

Commodus reigned thirteen years, and after him Severus eighteen. In the firſt years of his reign the chriſtians continued to be unmoleſted, owing, it is ſaid, to the influence of a favourite ſlave. But afterwards, for what particular reaſon does not appear, he allowed the perſecution of the chriſtians to proceed according to the ſtanding laws. By ſome this is accounted for in the following manner. Al-

* Hiſt. Lib. v. Cap. 21. p. 239. What this capital offence was does not diſtinctly appear. Some Interpreters ſay that by a law of M. Antoninus, it was a capital crime to accuſe a perſon of being a chriſtian, though at the ſame time it was death for any perſon voluntarily to declare himſelf one. But this is ſo inconſiſtent, that it is in the higheſt degree improbable.

binus, the competitor of Severus in the empire, being defeated by him near Lyons, that city was miſerably ſacked, and on this occaſion the chriſtians ſuffered extremely, after they had enjoyed a ſtate of repoſe of thirty years, from the dreadful perſecution mentioned above. In this interval Irenæus had been made biſhop, and by his aſſiduity, the exemplary lives of the chriſtians, and eſpecially their fortitude in bearing the perſecution, it is ſaid that almoſt all the citizens were become chriſtians. If this was the caſe, and if they had taken the part of Albinus, it will not be thought extraordinary that Severus ſhould have been exaſperated againſt the chriſtians in general. This happened in the ſixth year of his reign.

When, after this, Severus ſet out on his expedition againſt Perſia, he left Plautian prefect of the city. This was a man who had been raiſed from a low beginning, and who made a bad uſe of his power, eſpecially againſt the chriſtians. But the perſecution was general, and violent, from the tenth year of Severus to his death. According to Spartian, Severus made laws to prevent the increaſe of the Jews or chriſtians; and if he did nothing more than this, it would be evident that he bore them no

good

good will; and this would ſufficiently encourage thoſe who were diſpoſed to execute any of the ſtanding laws againſt them.

Many chriſtians ſuffered for their religion in Africa in this reign. Rutilius, who had fled from place to place, and who had given money to ſome ſoldiers to connive at his eſcape, was at length apprehended, and though grievouſly tormented, and then burned alive, he bore the whole with great reſolution*. Mavilus was alſo condemned by the proconſul Scapula to be thrown to the wild beaſts†.

This perſecution was particularly ſevere in Alexandria, and Egypt in general, where the martyrs bore torture and death with as much heroiſm as upon former occaſions. At this time Leonidas, the father of the famous Origen was beheaded‡.

Origen, who was then very young, diſtinguiſhed himſelf greatly by his zeal for chriſtianity, as well as his learning. He particularly exhorted all thoſe to whom he had acceſs to bear their ſufferings with fortitude; and ſeveral of thoſe to whom he was preceptor behaved with the greateſt reſoluton. Some

* Tertullian De fuga. Cap. v. p. 538.
† Ad Scapulam. Cap. 3. p. 70.
‡ Euſeb. Hiſt. Lib. vi. Cap. 1. p. 257.

of them are particularly mentioned by Euſebius. The firſt of them was called Plutarch, and as Origen attended him to the laſt, he was in great danger of ſuffering himſelf. The ſecond was Serenus, who was burned, the third Heraclides, and the fourth Heron; both beheaded. The fifth, after bearing much torture, was beheaded alſo. The ſixth was a woman, Herois, who was burned. The ſeventh, Baſilides, was beheaded.

There is ſomething remarkable in the hiſtory of this Baſilides, as connected with that of another celebrated martyr, Potamiæna. She was a woman diſtinguiſhed for her beauty and chaſtity, and who, after being much tortured, was burned, together with her mother Marcella; boiling pitch being poured over them from head to foot, which they bore with the greateſt conſtancy. Potamiæna had been threatened with proſtitution, but had been protected from the inſults of the mob by Baſilides, who was the ſoldier to whoſe cuſtody ſhe had been committed. She, ſeeing his humanity, ſaid ſhe would reward him after her death, by praying for his ſalvation. Being afterwards committed to cuſtody for not taking the military oath, becauſe it was an act of idolatry, and being aſked how he came to be converted,

he

he ſaid that Potamiæna had appeared to him in a dream, and told him ſhe had obtained her requeſt, and that he would ſoon be taken to heaven*. It is very poſſible, ſuch was the ſuperſtition of this age, that this woman might make ſuch a promiſe, it being no uncommon thing ſo to do; and this might have ſo impreſſed the mind of this man, as to produce his dream, without there being any thing miraculous in the caſe.

Severus returning in triumph to Rome gave the ſoldiers who attended him crowns to wear upon their heads on that occaſion; but this being declined by one of them, who was a chriſtian, and who choſe to carry it in his hand, he was diſmiſſed from the ſervice, and committed to priſon for puniſhment. This conduct offended many of the chriſtians, who thought that the ſoldier had provoked the emperor unneceſſarily; but Tertullian wrote a treatiſe to defend his conduct, and of this ſome account will be given hereafter.

Caracalla, the ſon of Severus, who reigned ſix years, from A. D. 211, to A. D. 217, was a monſter of wickedneſs and cruelty, but he ſpared the chriſtians; as alſo did Heliogabalus, a man of a ſimilar character. However,

* Euſeb. Hiſt. Lib. vi. Cap. 5. p. 262.

the laws againſt chriſtians being unrepealed, ſome governors of provinces took advantage of this circumſtance to harraſs them; and ſome think that it was under this emperor that Scapula, to whom Tertullian addreſſed an apology, exerciſed his ſeverities in Africa. Heliogabalus being a Syrian, and determined to give the god of his country (to whom he had been a prieſt) and the rites of his religion, a preference to all others, was the occaſion of many perſons giving their attention to the ſubject; in conſequence of which they were led to ſee the folly of all kinds of idolatry, and came to embrace chriſtianity.

The reign of Alexander Severus, from A. D. 222, to A. D. 235, was peculiarly favourable to the chriſtians, in conſequence of his mother Mammæa, an excellent woman, openly protecting them, though it does not appear that ſhe was a chriſtian. Hearing of the fame of Origen, ſhe ſent for him when ſhe was at Antioch, and retained him with her ſome time *. But notwithſtanding the good diſpoſition of the emperor, ſeveral of the governors of provinces continued to harraſs the chriſtians. Even Ulpian, the famous lawyer, is ſaid to have promoted the perſecution.

* Euſeb. Hiſt. Lib. vi. C. 21. p. 286.

But

But it is not at all extraordinary that, being a Pagan, he, as a lawyer, ſhould encourage the execution of the laws, and be deſirous of ſupporting the eſtabliſhed religion.

That this emperor himſelf had a reſpect for Chriſt, is evident from his joining him, as well as Abraham, to Orpheus, and the emperors who had been deified, and performing to them certain acts of religion in his private chapel*.

Maximin, a man of ſavage manners, having ſucceeded to the empire on the death of of Alexander, was an enemy of the chriſtians, on account, it may be thought, of his predeceſſor having favoured them; but he only ordered that their miniſters ſhould be put to death. Nor did the perſecution extend to all the provinces of the empire. It fell with the greateſt ſeverity on Pontus and Cappadocia, owing to the particular bigotry of the preſidents of thoſe provinces; but many of the chriſtians withdrew from them, and were ſafe.

From the valuable letter of Firmilian to Cyprian it appears that the perſecutions in theſe provinces of Aſia Minor, aroſe from the popular opinion that the dreadful earthquakes, with which they were then afflicted,

* Lampridii. Vita. Sec. 29. p. 540.

and in which whole cities were ſwallowed up, were owing to the chriſtians; and that it was greatly promoted by the violence of the prefect Seranianus*.

Origen is thought to have been particularly aimed at by Maximin, but he eſcaped by concealing himſelf. At this time, however, he wrote his treatiſe on martyrdom, and addreſſed it to Ambroſius, one of his pupils, and alſo to Protoctetus, a preſbyter of the church of Cæſarea, becauſe both of them had run great riſques in this perſecution, and had derived great honour from their behaviour in it. Maximin did not reign more than three years†.

We read of no perſecution of the chriſtians during the reign of Gordian, from A. D. 236, to A. D. 244, or in that of Philip, from A. D. 244 to A. D. 249, with which I ſhall cloſe this period of my hiſtory. The latter of theſe emperors is ſuppoſed by Euſebius‡, but without ſufficient ground, to have been a chriſtian§.

* Cypriani, Opera. p. 222.
† Euſeb. Hiſt. Lib. vi. Cap. 28. p. 293.
‡ Euſeb. Hiſt. Lib. vi. Cap. 34. p. 298.
§ For this I refer to Lardner's Teſtimonies, Vol. iii. p. 60.

Thus

Thus we have ſeen that, in this long period, there was no ſevere or general perſecution of the chriſtians of many years continuance, though it is probable that, during the whole of it, they ſuffered conſiderably in ſome particular provinces, owing to the bigotry of the preſidents, or the violence of the mob. However, both the times of peace and of perſecution were, in different ways, favourable to the growth of chriſtianity. Perſecution, beſides encreaſing the zeal of the chriſtians, preſerving the purity of their morals, and checking the violence with which their differences among themſelves would, no doubt, have otherwiſe been carried on, excited in unbelievers a deſire to know the grounds of that faith which produced ſuch wonderful effects; and as Tertullian obſerves, the uſual effect of inquiry was conviction. On the other hand, when times of peace and ſecurity returned, the chriſtians, with a fervour of zeal acquired in perſecution, were moſt aſſiduous in ſpreading their faith. They had felt the value and the power of it themſelves; and their benevolence, joined with a natural deſire to ſtrengthen their party, made them deſirous of extending the bleſſings of it to others.

SEC-

SECTION II.

Of the Sufferings of Perpetua and Felicitas, with thoſe of their companions.

THE martyrdom of Perpetua and Felicitas, with that of their companions, in the reign of Severus, is ſo peculiarly intereſting, that I have reſerved the account of it for a ſeparate ſection. The writer of this piece is unknown, but it bears unqueſtionable marks of antiquity, and appears to have been taken in part from the notes of Perpetua herſelf. It will farther ſerve to give us a clear idea of the manner in which theſe ancient perſecutions were generally conducted. The caſe of Perpetua is juſt mentioned by Auſtin*. The ſcene of the tranſaction was ſome place in Africa, probably Carthage.

On this occaſion there were apprehended three young men of the claſs of catechumens, viz. Saturninus, Secundulus, and Revocatus, with Felicitas his fellow ſlave, and together with them Ubia Perpetua, a widow of about twenty-two years of age, of a good family,

* De Anima, Cap. 55. Opera, Vol. vii. p. 304.

and

and well educated, who had a father and mother living, two brothers (one of them a catechumen) and an infant at the breaſt.

As ſoon as Perpetua was informed againſt, her father (who alone of all the family continued a heathen) uſed every method of perſuaſion, and even force, to induce her to deſiſt from her purpoſe of ſuffering martyrdom, ſo that, ſhe ſaid, ſhe was glad when he left her; and in this interval ſhe and the reſt were baptized. Some days after this they were all thrown into priſon, and the treatment ſhe met with there affected her at firſt very much; as the darkneſs of the place, the great heat occaſioned by the number of priſoners, the rudeneſs of the ſoldiers, and eſpecially her anxiety about her child. Two deacons, however, Tertius and Pomponius, who miniſtered to their wants, procured, by money, the removal of all of them into a more airy part of the priſon, where Perpetua gave ſuck to her child, which was ready to die for want of it.

In this ſituation Perpetua comforted her mother, and encouraged her brother, intruſting to him the care of her ſon, and was as happy, ſhe ſaid, as if ſhe had been in a palace. Here ſhe had a remarkable dream, from which ſhe concluded that ſhe ſhould

certainly ſuffer, but by which ſhe was, notwithſtanding, greatly encouraged in her reſolution.

A few days after this there was a report that theſe chriſtian priſoners would ſoon be called before the governor, and then her father, in great grief, came to her, intreating her to have compaſſion on his grey hairs, and on her mother, brothers, and child, which, he ſaid, could not ſurvive her. This he did, kiſſing her hands, and throwing himſelf at her feet, which ſhewing more affection than he had diſcovered before, gave her great concern. Beſides, he was the only relation ſhe had who would not, in reality, think themſelves honoured by her conduct; but ſhe only anſwered, that ſhe was at the diſpoſal of God, and not at her own.

The next day, while they were at dinner, they were ſuddenly called to an audience in the public forum, where a prodigious croud was aſſembled. There all the company confeſſed that they were chriſtians; but before Perpetua had an opportunity of doing it in the cuſtomary form, her father preſented himſelf, holding her child in his arms, and begging that ſhe would have compaſſion upon him. Alſo Hilarianus the procurator (who

then acted in the place of the deceaſed proconſul) joined him in his entreaties, and deſired her to think of her aged father, and her own child, and to ſacrifice for the ſafety of the emperor. But ſhe only anſwered that ſhe was a chriſtian, and could not do it.

After this the father was ordered to deſiſt, and as he retired unwillingly, one of the lictors ſtruck him with a rod, which affected her, ſhe ſaid, as if ſhe had been ſtruck herſelf. Then, having all made their confeſſion, they were ſentenced to be thrown to the wild beaſts, notwithſtanding which, they returned with great joy to the priſon. Thence ſhe ſent Pomponius the deacon to requeſt that her child might be ſent to her as uſual, to be ſuckled; but this favour was then refuſed. However, ſhe bore the cruel diſappointment better than ſhe could have expected.

After a few days, Pudens the jailer being diſpoſed to favour them, allowed their friends to come to ſee them; and when the time of exhibition drew near, Perpetua's father came again; when he threw himſelf upon the ground, tore his beard, and did and ſaid every thing that could have a tendency to move her; but all had no other effect than to fill her with pity for him.

Our

Our author now proceeds to give an account of ſome of the other priſoners; and the caſe of Felicitas is almoſt as intereſting as that of Perpetua. Being eight months gone with child, ſhe was much concerned leſt her execution ſhould be put off till another time, and that then ſhe ſhould die in the company of ordinary malefactors. The idea of going without her affected alſo her fellow-priſoners. But three days before the exhibition ſhe was delivered; and being in great pain, thoſe who attended her aſked her how ſhe ſhould be able to bear what ſhe would ſuffer when ſhe was expoſed to the wild beaſts, when ſhe was ſo much affected with the pains of child-birth. She replied that, in this caſe, ſhe was left to herſelf, but that in her other ſufferings ſhe ſhould have another to ſupport her, even him for whom ſhe ſuffered. Being delivered of a daughter, a ſiſter of her's undertook to bring it up. Secundulus died in priſon; but they had been joined by another of their friends called Saturus, who after they were apprehended, had voluntarily ſurrendered himſelf.

The day before the exhibition they all joined in a love feaſt, with their chriſtian friends who were permitted to viſit them, in the preſence of many ſtrangers, whom curioſity had brought

brought to the place. To theſe the priſoners expreſſed great joy in the idea of their approaching ſufferings, and endeavoured to engage their attention. Saturus particularly bade them obſerve their countenances, that they might know them all again the next day. From this extraordinary ſpectacle theſe ſtrangers retired with marks of aſtoniſhment, and many of them afterwards became converts.

When the day of exhibition was come, they all went from the priſon with erect and cheerful countenances, trembling, our author ſays, with joy rather than with fear. Perpetua eſpecially walked in ſuch a manner as ſtruck the ſpectators with particular reſpect; and Felicitas rejoiced that, being delivered of her child, ſhe could accompany her friends to this glorious combat. When they were arrived at the gate of the amphitheatre, the officers, according to cuſtom, began to clothe the men in the dreſſes of the prieſts of Saturn, and the women in thoſe of the prieſteſſes of Ceres. But when they remonſtrated againſt the injuſtice of being compelled by force to do that, for refuſing which they were willing to die, the tribune gave them leave to ſuffer in their own habits.

They

They then entered the amphitheatre; when Perpetua advanced ſinging hymns, and Revocatus, Saturninus, and Saturus, ſolemnly warned the people as they went along. When they came in view of Hilarianus the proprætor, they ſaid, "You judge us, but "God will judge you." This ſo provoked the populace, that, at their requeſt, all the three were ſcourged. But in this they rejoiced, as having the honour to ſhare in one part of the ſufferings of their Saviour.

When the beaſts were let looſe, Saturninus, according to a wiſh which he had previouſly expreſſed, died by the attack of ſeveral of them ruſhing upon him at the ſame time; and Revocatus was killed by a leopard and a bear. Saturus was firſt expoſed to a wild boar; but while the officer who attended was gored by him, ſo that he died the next day, he was only dragged about, and not materially hurt. Alſo a bear (which was an animal that he particularly dreaded) to which he was next expoſed, would not go out of his den to meddle with him. But at the end of the exhibition he was thrown in the way of a leopard; and ſo much blood guſhed out at one of his bites, that the ſpectators ridiculed him, as being *baptized with blood.* However, not being

being quite killed, he had the preſence of mind, when the animal was withdrawn, to ſpeak to Pudens the gaoler, deſiring him to be mindful of his faith, and not to be diſheartened, but encouraged, by his ſufferings. He even took a ring from his finger, and dipping it in one of his wounds, gave it him as a pledge.

Perpetua and Felicitas were firſt incloſed in nets, and then expoſed to a wild cow. But this ſight ſtruck the ſpectators with horror, as the former was a delicate woman, and the breaſts of the latter were ſtreaming with milk after her delivery. They were therefore recalled, and expoſed in a common looſe dreſs. Perpetua was firſt toſſed by the beaſt, and being thrown down, ſhe had the attention to compoſe her dreſs as ſhe lay on the ground. Then riſing, and ſeeing Felicitas much more torn than herſelf, ſhe gave her her hand, and aſſiſted her to riſe; and for ſome time they both ſtood together, near the gate of the amphitheatre. Thither Perpetua ſent for her brother, who was a catechumen, and exhorted him to continue firm in the faith, to love his fellow-chriſtians, and not to be diſcouraged by her ſufferings.

Being all in a mangled condition, they were taken to the uſual place of execution, to be

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diſpatched with a ſword; but the populace requeſting that they ſhould be removed to another place, where the execution might be ſeen to more advantage, they got up of their own accord to go thither. Then, having kiſſed one another, they quietly reſigned themſelves to their fate. In walking, Saturus had ſupported Perpetua, and he expired the firſt. She was obſerved to direct a young and ignorant ſoldier, who was appointed to be her executioner, in what manner he ſhould perform his office.

SECTION III.

Of the Controverſy concerning Eaſter.

COMPARED with the ſcenes which I ſhall be obliged to bring before my readers in ſome ſubſequent periods of this hiſtory, the controverſies among chriſtians within this period were few, and conducted with great moderation; though, on one occaſion, and that indeed a very ſlight one, we have a lamentable inſtance of unjuſtifiable violence in one chriſtian biſhop.

The only feſtival that we find any mention of in the ſcriptures (if, indeed, that was conſidered as a *feſtival* in the earlieſt times) was *the Lord's day*, obſerved in commemoration of our Saviour's reſurrection, and which the Gentile chriſtians obſerved for the purpoſe of their aſſemblies for public worſhip, as the Jews did their ſabbath. It is evident, however, that very ſoon after, if not before, the death of the apoſtles, for the ſame reaſon that the chriſtians had obſerved a weekly commemoration of the reſurrection, they fell into the cuſtom of holding a greater annual one. This was certainly natural; and except that one obſervance leads to others, and this without end (ſo that it is beſt upon the whole to keep to ſome definite rule, as that of the ſcriptures) they who introduced and followed this practice of obſerving Eaſter cannot be blamed.

Very ſoon, however, chriſtians in different places fell into a cuſtom of obſerving Eaſter on different days, ſome in the Eaſt on the day of the Jewiſh paſſover, or the fourteenth of the month Niſan, on whatever day of the week it might happen to be; and thoſe in the Weſt on the Sunday following it, becauſe it

was on a Sunday that Chriſt roſe from the dead. It had alſo been the cuſtom to ſet apart ſome time for the purpoſe of *faſting* before this great feſtival, in commemoration of the ſufferings and crucifixion of Chriſt, which had preceded his reſurrection.

Unhappily, it was, from very early times, thought highly expedient, in order to preſerve the *unity of the church*, that the opinions and practices of all chriſtians ſhould be the ſame; and therefore when this difference came to be noticed, endeavours were uſed to promote an uniformity with reſpect to it. With this view Polycarp, who, according to Irenæus, had been uſed to obſerve the fourteenth day of the month, together with the apoſtle John, whoſe diſciple he had been, made a journey to Rome, on purpoſe to confer with Anicetus on the ſubject. In this conference each of theſe biſhops maintained his own opinion, and, notwithſtanding what was alleged by the other, determined to adhere to his former practice; but they agreed that ſuch a difference as this ſhould not break the communion between the different parts of the church of Chriſt; and to ſhew his charity, Anicetus deſired Polycarp to officiate for him

at

at the celebration of the Lord's ſupper, which he did, and they parted with mutual good-will.

In this ſtate things continued till the reign of Commodus, when, ſuperſtition encreaſing, more ſtreſs was laid upon ritual obſervances than in former times; and a ſeaſon of peace giving the chriſtians more leiſure to attend to the differences among themſelves, more offence was taken by chriſtian ſocieties at practices which differed from their own. To heal theſe differences, ſynods, or councils, were held both in the Eaſt and in the Weſt. Thoſe which decided in favour of celebrating Eaſter on Sunday were the following: two in Paleſtine, in one of which Theophilus, biſhop of Ceſarea, and in the other Narciſſus, biſhop of Jeruſalem, preſided; one in Pontus, in which Palma, an old biſhop, preſided; one of the churches of Oſdroene, and its neighbourhood; one in Rome, where Victor preſided; and another of the churches in Gaul, in which Irenæus preſided; Bacchyllus alſo, biſhop of Conon, publiſhed a letter in favour of this deciſion.

But the biſhops of Aſia proper, in a ſynod which was convened on this occaſion, decided in favour of the fourteenth day of the month;

 and

and Polycrates, who had preſided in it, wrote a letter in the name of his brethren, to Victor, biſhop of Rome, in which he gave him their reaſons for adhering to the cuſtom of their anceſtors, derived from the apoſtle John; adding that, notwithſtanding the general deciſion in favour of a different practice, they thought it their duty to obey God rather than man.

Victor, who was a man of a violent temper, on receiving this letter, would have declared, by a ſolemn ſentence, all the biſhops of Aſia cut off from the communion of the catholic church, and of courſe declared heretics. But this violence was far from being agreeable to thoſe biſhops who held the ſame opinion with himſelf; and among them Irenæus wrote an excellent letter upon the ſubject, expoſtulating with him on the unreaſonableneſs of breaking the communion of the chriſtian church for ſuch a trifle as this; alleging that there were other differences among them as great as this, but yet ſuch as might be allowed without any breach of chriſtian friendſhip. They differed, he ſaid, about the preceding *faſt*, as well as about the day of the feaſt; ſome faſting one day, others two, and others more; and ſome juſt forty hours (for that is the moſt

moſt probable ſenſe of the paſſage) differences which aroſe in the time of their anceſtors; and he concludes with the account of the friendly conference between Polycarp and Anicetus upon the ſubject. Irenæus wrote alſo to other biſhops as well as to Victor, to the ſame purpoſe.

This controverſy ended for the preſent, as moſt others have done, each party, for a time, being confirmed in his own opinion and practice. At the council of Nice we ſhall find the preſent rule for obſerving Eaſter-day on the Sunday made abſolute, with reſpect to all the chriſtian world*.

SECTION IV.

Of the Gnoſtics within this Period.

THE moſt conſiderable of the Gnoſtics within this period were the Marcionites, who were much divided among themſelves. Rhodon, the diſciple of Tatian, gives an account of a conference which he had with a

* Euſeb. Hiſt. Lib. vi. Cap. 23, 24. p. 241, &c.

Marcionite of the name of Apelles, whom he acknowledges to have been very reſpectable, both for his years, and his virtue. He owned one principle of all things, whereas Marcion and ſome others held that there were two original principles, and ſome ſaid there were three. He ſaid, however, that the prophets were inſpired by an evil being.

According to Rhodon, Apelles was not a very zealous Gnoſtic; for he held that every perſon ſhould continue in the faith in which he was educated, and that the catholics might be ſaved, if they had good works. He alſo acknowledged that, though he was a believer in one principle, and could not reſiſt the conviction of there being no more than one, he was not able to prove this by ſtrict demonſtration. For this Rhodon derided him; and yet they who believe in the unity of God on the principles of the light of nature only, are not able to advance any thing more in favour of it, than Rhodon might have done for his *one principle*, which was, in reality, the ſame thing*.

* Euſeb. Hiſt. Lib. v. Cap. 13. p. 225.

SECTION V.

Of the Unitarians within this Period.

EUSEBIUS introduces an article relating to the Ebionites under the reign of Trajan, which will equally apply to this period. In this chapter he ſhews himſelf moſt violently hoſtile to them, on account of all of them holding the doctrine of the ſimple humanity of Chriſt, though ſome of them admitted his miraculous conception. None of them, he ſays, would admit that he was the *logos*, or the wiſdom of the Father. The appellation of *Ebionites*, which ſignifies *poor*, he ſays, they got from their mean opinion concerning Chriſt; but it is much more probable that it was a name impoſed upon them by the unbelieving Jews, either on account of the poverty of the greater part of them, or from the contempt in which they held them. "An evil dæmon," he ſays, "has drawn "them aſide thus far from the faith, though "he was not able to draw them from the faith "altogether. They were," he ſays, "rigid "obſervers of the law of Moſes, they rejected "the

" the epiſtles of Paul, calling him a deſerter " of the law, they made uſe of the goſpel " according to the Hebrews only, and ob- " ſerved both their own ſabbath and the chriſ- " tian Lord's-day *."

In this period Euſebius gives an account of a perſon who, in the reign of Severus, wrote againſt the hereſy, as he calls it, of Artemon, who lived in the reign of Commodus, A. D. 185. In this treatiſe, which is ſuppoſed to have been written by Caius, a preſbyter of Rome, and to have been called *the little Labyrinth*, the opinion of the ſimple humanity of Chriſt was cenſured as novel, though the writer of it ſays, that they who held it maintained that it was the oldeſt doctrine of all, even that of the apoſtles themſelves, and that it continued to be the prevailing opinion till the time of Victor, about A. D. 190, but that in the time of his ſucceſſor, Zephyrinus, it began to be corrupted.

It is ſomething remarkable that we have no account of any treatiſe written againſt the unitarian doctrine before this, which was about twenty years after Artemon, from which circumſtance it may be clearly inferred, that till this time this doctrine had not given much

* Euſeb. Hiſt. Lib. iii. Cap. 27. p. 122.

offence;

offence; and yet that it had exiſted before, and was even generally prevalent, is undeniable. It was ſo well known to have been ſo in the time of the ancient chriſtian writers, that, in order to account for it, they unanimouſly acknowledged that the doctrines of the pre-exiſtence and divinity of Chriſt, had not been taught with clearneſs and effect by the apoſtles, and other early preachers of the goſpel, leſt it ſhould ſtagger their hearers, and eſpecially thoſe of the Jewiſh nation; and the apoſtle John they ſaid was the firſt who clearly explained it, in the firſt verſes of his goſpel; which, according to them, was publiſhed almoſt twenty years after the deſtruction of Jeruſalem. And yet there is no evidence of any change being produced in the opinion of the chriſtian world by this goſpel, no account of any other writings of that period to enforce the new doctrine of John, and nothing written in oppoſition to it; ſo that it is very evident that no ſuch doctrine was at that time underſtood to be publiſhed by him, and therefore the hypotheſis of theſe chriſtian fathers is deſtitute of all probability. The fact, however, which they acknowledge, of the univerſality of unitarianiſm at the time of the publi-

publication of John's goſpel muſt remain undeniable.

What the unitarians of this age alleged was highly probable. Juſtin Martyr publiſhed the doctrine of the pre-exiſtence of Chriſt, as the logos of the father, about A. D. 140; and between that time and that of this writer about ſeventy years had elapſed, ſo that it is probable that the majority of the learned biſhops might now have adopted it, but not much before; and it was ſtill reprobated with great indignation by the majority of the common people, who juſtly thought that it infringed upon the great doctrine of the *monarchy*, or ſole divinity of God the Father. This is ſo evident from a paſſage of Tertullian, a writer within the period of which I am treating, and who was himſelf a trinitarian (ſo that his acknowledgment muſt have been made with reluctance) that I ſhall recite the paſſage. "The "ſimple," he ſays*, "the ignorant, and un-"learned, who are always the greater part of "the body of chriſtians; ſince the rule of "faith" [the apoſtles creed] "transfers the "worſhip of many gods to the one true God; "not underſtanding that the unity of God is

* Ad Praxeam, Sec. 3. p. 502.

"to

" to be maintained with the *œconomy*, dread " [*expaveſcunt*] this œconomy; imagining that " this number and diſpoſition of a trinity, is " a diviſion of the unity. They therefore " will have it that we are worſhippers of " two, and even of three gods, but that " they are the worſhippers of one God " only. We, they ſay, hold the monarchy. " Even the Latins, and the moſt ignorant " among them, have learned to baul out " for the *monarchy*, as if they underſtood " that Greek word; and the Greeks them- " ſelves will not underſtand the œconomy." This is the language of ſtrong feeling and complaint, and gives us the cleareſt idea of the ſtate of this opinion in the period of which I am now treating; clearly proving that unitarianiſm was the doctrine of the common people, and that many of the learned were much diſpleaſed at it.

Euſebius, to prove that the unitarian doctrine was not ſo ancient as the unitarians themſelves pretended, alleges the writings of ancient chriſtians, but among theſe he mentions none older than Juſtin Martyr. He vindicates Victor from the charge of holding the unitarian doctrine, on account of his having excommunicated Theodotus, who profeſſed

it. But in my *Hiſtory of early Opinions concerning Chriſt**. I have ſhewn that it is far from being evident that Theodotus was excommunicated as an unitarian, eſpecially as it is aſſerted by the writer of the appendix to Tertullian's treatiſe, De Præſcriptione, that Victor was a favourer of the unitarian doctrine, as the unitarians themſelves aſſerted.

With reſpect to this writer againſt the unitarians, viz. Caius, who aſſerted the novelty of their opinion, what Euſebius ſays concerning him will not add to his credit with men of ſenſe. He ſays that one Natalis was hired for a certain ſtipend, by two unitarians, diſciples of Theodotus, to be a biſhop to their church, that after this he was often reproved by Chriſt in a dream; but neglecting this admonition, from his love of honour and gain, he was grievouſly beaten and wounded by angels, a whole night through; that riſing early in the morning he went in ſackcloth and aſhes, and with tears, to Zephyrinus, throwing himſelf at his feet, and at thoſe of the laity, ſo as to move the whole church to compaſſion. By theſe marks of contrition, and ſhewing his wounds, he was, though with difficulty, reſtored to the communion of the church. A

* Vol. iii. p. 303.

fact

fact like this, ſays the writer, would have brought the Sodomites to repentance.

This writer then proceeds to charge the unitarians with not troubling themſelves about the doctrine of the ſcriptures; but with having recourſe to ſyllogiſms, and geometry, buſying themſelves about terreſtrial things, ignorant of him who comes from heaven. Some of them, he ſays, ſtudy Euclid's geometry, Ariſtotle, Theophraſtus, and Galen. He adds, that they adulterate the ſcriptures, and publiſh copies of them different from one another, that they either deny the inſpiration of the ſcriptures, and are therefore infidels, or pretend to be wiſer than the holy Spirit, and therefore are poſſeſſed by dæmons. Some of them, however, he allows, did not adulterate the ſcriptures, but he ſays, they rejected the law and the prophets all together; and for the ſake of a lawleſs and atheiſtical doctrine, on the pretence of grace, they rolled down into the deepeſt gulph of perdition*. What credit can be given to a man who can rail in this manner, or to the hiſtorian who can quote ſuch things with approbation. Honeſt and worthy as Euſebius might be in other reſpects, we muſt, after this, pronounce him

* Euſeb. Hiſt. Lib. v. Cap. 28. p. 251.

to

to be a man not to be truſted when he writes concerning unitarians.

In this period Euſebius gives an account of another unitarian, viz. Beryllus, biſhop of Boſtra, in Arabia, who flouriſhed A. D. 230. He is ſaid to have maintained that the divinity in Chriſt was not his own, but his Father's. A ſynod was called upon the ſubject, in which Origen is ſaid to have convinced him of his error. The acts of this ſynod were extant in the time of Euſebius, with the queſtions propoſed by Origen, and all that paſſed on the occaſion *. It is much to be wiſhed that they were extant now.

At the ſame time, ſays Euſebius, ſome chriſtians in Arabia held the doctrine of the ſoul dying with the body, and riſing together with it at the reſurrection; that a ſynod was called on this account alſo, and that Origen, attending again, induced thoſe who held that opinion to abandon it †. Theſe are marks of primitive chriſtianity, unadulterated by that heathen philoſophy to which Origen was unhappily too much attached. It is not, however, to be wondered at, if his ingenuity

* Euſeb. Hiſt. Lib. vi. Cap. 33. p. 297.
† Ibid. Lib. vi. Cap. 37. p. 299.

and

and eloquence ſhould puzzle and ſilence plain men.

To this Euſebius ſubjoins an account of the hereſy of the *Elceſaites*, which, he ſays, was extinguiſhed almoſt as ſoon as it aroſe. They ſeem upon the whole to have been Jewiſh Gnoſtics, but the account of them is very imperfect and obſcure *.

SECTION VI.

Of the Growth of Superſtition within this Period.

BY the writings of Tertullian we are able to point out the great progreſs which ſuperſtition had made among chriſtians in this early period, eſpecially with reſpect to baptiſm and the Lord's ſupper; the application of the elements of them being conſidered not merely as expreſſive of ſentiments of the heart, but as being themſelves of a ſacred nature, and having a real purifying virtue, ſuch as was aſcribed to ſimilar things in the religion of the heathens. Chriſtians alſo conſi-

* Euſeb. Hiſt. Lib. vi. Cap. 38. p. 300.

dered the Lord's-day with a kind of reſpect which cannot be pronounced free from ſuperſtition, and the uſe which they made of the ſign of the croſs is certainly deſerving of the ſame cenſure. As the paſſage is remarkable and inſtructive, I ſhall give it entire from that treatiſe of his in which he defended the conduct of the ſoldier who refuſed to wear a crown in a triumphal proceſſion, as mentioned above. His object is to ſhew that many practices are ſufficiently authorized by tradition, without the authority of ſcripture.

Beginning with baptiſm, he ſays, "Before "we go to the water, we declare in the "church, before the biſhop, that we renounce "the devil, his pomp, and his miniſters. We "are then dipped three times, ſaying more "than our Lord in the goſpel preſcribed. We "then taſte of milk and honey, and from that "day abſtain from our uſual waſhings a whole "week. We take the ſacrament of the Lord's "ſupper, both at the uſual time of eating, "and alſo in thoſe aſſemblies which are held "before day-break, nor do we take the ele"ments from any other hands than thoſe of "the clergy. We annually make oblations "for the dead, as in commemoration of the "day of their proper birth" [meaning their mar-

martyrdom]. " We think it wrong to faſt, " or to kneel on the Lord's day, or in all the " interval from Eaſter to Pentecoſt. We are " anxious leſt any part of the ſacramental " bread or wine fall to the ground. We ſign " ourſelves with the ſign of the croſs in the " forehead, whenever we go from home or " return, when we put on our clothes or our " ſhoes, when we go to the bath, or ſit down " to meat, when we light our candles, when we " lie down, and when we ſit." For all theſe obſervances, he ſays, we have no rule beſides tradition*. It was, indeed, a great deal that chriſtians had learned of this new maſter in ſo ſhort a time. We ſhall ſee, however, that they took many other leſſons of the ſame kind afterwards.

* De Corona, Sect. iii. p. 101.

SECTION VII.

Of the Writers within this Period.

BY the writers of any period it will be eaſy to form an idea of the ſubjects which engaged the attention of mankind in the courſe of it. I ſhall therefore always cloſe the account of every conſiderable diviſion of this hiſtory with a brief account of them; and while Euſebius is my principal guide, I ſhall adhere pretty nearly to the order in which he places them.

Apollonius, who was forty years old when Montanus publiſhed his prophecies, wrote againſt him, and his celebrated followers, Priſcilla and Maximilla. He was replied to by Tertullian *.

Theophilus, biſhop of Cæſarea, wrote a ſynodical epiſtle againſt thoſe who celebrated Eaſter at the ſame time with the Jews †. On the ſame ſubject Bacchyllus, biſhop of Corinth, wrote an elegant treatiſe, in the name of all the biſhops of Achaia ‡. Polycrates,

* Lib. v. Cap. 18. p. 235. Jerom Catalogus. Cap. 51.
† Ibid. Cap. 54. ‡ Ibid. Cap. 55.

biſhop

biſhop of Epheſus, wrote in defence of the Jewiſh time of celebrating Eaſter, againſt Victor, biſhop of Rome, who alſo had written on the ſame ſubject *.

Pantænus was a Sicilian, who had been a Stoic philoſopher. He preſided over the ſchool of Alexandria, which had been long eſtabliſhed for inſtruction in ſacred literature, and was kept up till the time of Euſebius. But he quitted this ſchool to go on a miſſion to preach the goſpel in India, where he found the diſciples of the apoſtle Bartholomew, as was mentioned before. Returning from this miſſion, he reſumed his care of the Alexandrian ſchool, and wrote ſome commentaries on the ſcriptures, which are now loſt †.

Clemens of Alexandria was educated under Pantænus, and ſucceeded him in his ſchool. He wrote a miſcellaneous work, called *Stromata*, in which he treats of the true principles of knowledge, and which contains many things againſt the Gnoſtics. But when he wrote his *Inſtitutions*, a work now loſt, but of which an account is preſerved by Photius, he muſt have been a Gnoſtic himſelf, as it contains many Gnoſtic opinions. He alſo wrote

* Jerom Catalogus, Cap. 45. 56.
† Euſeb. Hiſt. Lib. v. Cap. 10. p. 223.

againſt the errors of the Jews, a treatiſe on Eaſter, and ſome other moral tracts, which are now loſt. But beſides his Stromata, we have his exhortation to the Gentiles, and a ſmall piece on the ſalvation of the rich*.

Of the writers who flouriſhed in the time of Commodus, Euſebius juſt mentions the following: Heraclitus's (by Jerom called Heraclius) commentaries on the apoſtle, meaning Paul; Maximus and Apion on the origin of evil, and concerning matter; Candidus on the work of the ſix days; and Sextus on the reſurrection. Euſebius ſays, in the ſame place, that there were many other writings, the titles of which he did not know, and many of them were anonymous †. About the ſame time Brabianus wrote ſome ſmall pieces on ſubjects of chriſtianity ‡.

Judas wrote on the book of Revelation in the time of Severus, and judged, from the ſeverity of his perſecution, that antichriſt would ſoon appear ‖.

Serapion, biſhop of Antioch, in the firſt year of Caracalla, wrote ſeveral things which

* Euſeb. Hiſt. Lib. v. Cap. 11. p. 223. Lib. vi. Cap. 6. p. 264. Ibid. Cap. 13. p. 271.

† Ibid. Lib. v. Cap. 27. p. 251.

‡ Jerom Catalogus. Cap. 62.

‖ Euſeb. Hiſt. Lib. vi. Cap. 7. p. 264.

Euſe-

Euſebius had not ſeen; but he mentions a letter of his to Domninus, who in the time of perſecution had embraced the Jewiſh religion, ſome other epiſtles, the ſubjects of which he does not mention, and a treatiſe on the goſpel of Peter, ſhewing the falſity of it, as containing ſome things favourable to Gnoſticiſm*.

Hippolytus, probably a biſhop in Arabia, wrote on Eaſter, the work of the ſix days, the works which followed the ſix days, againſt Marcion, on Solomon's Song, on a chapter in Ezekiel, againſt all hereſies, and other treatiſes which Euſebius had not ſeen †.

Caius, a preſbyter of the church of Rome, wrote againſt Proclus, a defender of the Montaniſts. He condemned the raſhneſs of ſome perſons in compiling the books of ſcripture, and reckoned only thirteen epiſtles of Paul, omitting that to the Hebrews ‡. He is alſo thought to have been the author of the treatiſe, intitled, the *little Labyrinth* againſt Artemon, of which an account has been given; and Photius aſcribes to him a treatiſe *on the*

* Euſeb. Hiſt. Lib. v. Cap. 13. p. 236. Lib. vi. Cap. 12. p. 270.

† Ibid. Lib. vi. Cap. 22. p. 286.

‡ Ibid. Lib. vi. Cap. 20. p. 285.

univerſe, which went under the name of Joſephus.

Beryllus, biſhop of Boſtra, the ſame whom Origen is ſaid to have convinced of his error relating to the ſimple humanity of Chriſt, was the author, Euſebius ſays, of ſeveral elegant works, the ſubjects of which he does not mention*. Some of them, it is probable, contained his opinion concerning Chriſt.

Julius Africanus, of Paleſtine, wrote an epiſtle to Origen, to prove the ſpurioufneſs of the hiſtory of Suſanna, and a book on the differences between the genealogies of Matthew and Luke; but his principal work was on the chronology of the world to the time of Heliogabalus. We have almoſt the whole of this in Euſebius's Chronicon †.

Tertullian, a native of Carthage, and the oldeſt of the Latin Fathers, was the author of a great number of works, many of which are come down to us, and he was famous for turning Montaniſt after he had written ſeveral of them. Thoſe that are now extant are ſuppoſed by Dupin to have been compoſed in the following order; of pennance, of baptiſm, of prayer, an apology for the chriſtian religion,

* Euſeb. Hiſt. Lib. vi. Cap. 20. p. 284.
† Ibid. Lib. vi. Cap. 31. p. 295.

gion, concerning patience, and an exhortation to the martyrs. Theſe were written before he was a Montaniſt. When he appears to have been inclined to that ſect, he wrote his treatiſes concerning public ſpectacles, of idolatry, of the ornaments and dreſs of women, two books addreſſed to his wife, and a treatiſe on the ſoul. After he was a Montaniſt, he wrote his books againſt Marcion, of preſcription, of the fleſh of Chriſt, of the reſurrection of the fleſh, Scorpiacus (againſt hereſies) of the crown, of the pallium, and againſt the Jews. He alſo wrote in this period of his life againſt Praxeas, the unitarian Montaniſt, againſt Hermogenes who held ſome Gnoſtic opinions, and againſt the Valentinians; his treatiſe of chaſtity, of faſting, of monogomy, an exhortation to chaſtity, of flight in time of perſecution, a treatiſe to ſhew that virgins ought to be veiled, and a letter to Scapula the proconſul of Africa relating to his perſecution of chriſtians mentioned before. Several other treatiſes paſs for his which were not written by him.

Ammonius, the maſter of Origen in Philoſophy, wrote a treatiſe on the agreement between Moſes and Chriſt, which is now loſt, and

and the harmony of the four goſpels, which is thought by ſome to be that which is now contained in the Bibliotheca Patrum. Euſebius warmly defends his being a chriſtian againſt Porphyry*.

The moſt diſtinguiſhed character, and writer, in this period was Origen, a native of Egypt, ſurnamed *Adamantinus*, from his incredible labours. For beſides his public teaching, which was inceſſant, he is ſaid by ſome to have written ſix thouſand volumes, but many of them were probably letters, or very ſmall tracts. The catalogue of them, ſays Euſebius, would be a book of itſelf †. The character of Origen was ſo great, that it was commonly ſaid of him, that his life was worthy of his eloquence, and his eloquence of his life ‡. Porphyry, the Heathen philoſopher, who wrote againſt chriſtianity, ſpeaks of his having known Origen, and commends him highly §, though he charges him with mixing Greek ideas with his chriſtianity, and continually ſtudying Plato ‖. He alſo ſays

* Euſeb. Hiſt. Lib. vi. Cap. 19. p. 280.
† Ibid. Lib. vi. Cap. 32. p. 296.
‡ Ibid. Lib. vi. Cap. 3. p. 261.
§ Ibid. Lib. vi. Cap. 19. p. 280.
‖ Ibid.

that

that he borrowed his allegorical method of interpreting ſcripture from Pythagoras *.

As the hiſtory of Origen is written much at large by Euſebius (though he profeſſes to abridge it) and he was a man ſo remarkable for his piety, genius, and application, I ſhall give the outlines of it. His enemy, Jerom, allowed that he was a great man from his infancy. He was indeed an honour to chriſtianity, and to human nature. His father Leonidas gave him a pious and learned education, and his early improvements were ſuch as gave his worthy parent the greateſt ſatisfaction. Though he was not more than ſeventeen years of age when the perſecution under Severus began in Alexandria, and his father was apprehended and confined, he would, at that early age, have thrown himſelf in the way of the perſecutors, if his mother, after her moſt earneſt entreaties had failed, had not hid his cloaths, in order to prevent him going abroad †. He wrote, however, to his father, exhorting him to perſevere in his profeſſion at all events, and without concerning himſelf about his family, though in caſe of his death, there would be a widow and ſeven

* Euſeb. Hiſt. Lib. vi. Cap. 19. p. 282.
† Ibid. Lib. vi. Cap. 2. p. 258.

children

children left in great poverty; and, thus encouraged, his father was beheaded, and behaved with becoming reſolution.

A large family being left in this deſtitute condition, a rich lady of Alexandria, a friend of virtue and genius, took Origen into her family. At the ſame time ſhe entertained a diſtinguiſhed Gnoſtic of Antioch, and her houſe was the reſort of other men of letters. In this ſituation, though Origen could not refrain from the ſociety of this Gnoſtic, he was ſo ſteady to his principles, that he would never join with him in prayer, but ſtrictly adhered to the communion of the catholic church.

Not chuſing to be unneceſſarily burthenſome to his benefactreſs, and having made conſiderable proficiency in literature, he was ſoon able to maintain himſelf by teaching grammar*. But the great ſchool of Alexandria being deſerted by its maſter in time of perſecution, many perſons applied to him for inſtruction in the principles of religion, though he was not more than eighteen years old; and as many were by him brought over to chriſtianity, he was at that early age appointed catechiſt by Demetrius the biſhop of

* Euſeb. Hiſt. Lib. vi. Cap. 2. p. 259.

Alexandria. On this he diſcontinued the teaching of grammar, and he was ſo devoted to ſacred literature, that he even ſold all his books of profane ſcience, receiving the ſmall ſum of four oboli a day from the perſon who purchaſed them *.

While he was in this employment, many of his pupils became martyrs; and being in ſo conſpicuous a ſtation, it was with great difficulty that he himſelf eſcaped. Being now obliged to inſtruct women as well as men, and forming to himſelf a plan of great auſterity of manners, in a fit of enthuſiaſtic zeal, he made a literal application to himſelf of that precept of our Saviour concerning perſons making themſelves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's ſake; an action for which, in the ſober reflection of his after life, he greatly condemned himſelf †.

Applying himſelf with ſingular aſſiduity to the duties of his office as catechiſt, he greatly encreaſed his reputation, eſpecially by an edition of the ſcriptures of the Old Teſtament, with all the different Greek verſions, in ſeparate columns. He was induced, however, for what reaſon does not appear (but it was

* Euſeb. Hiſt. Lib. vi. Cap. 3. p. 261.
† Ibid. Lib. vi. Cap. 8. p. 264.

no

no doubt ſufficiently urgent) to quit his employment and his ſtudies for the purpoſe of making a viſit to Rome, in the time of Zephyrinus. Returning very ſoon to Alexandria, many perſons of learning, from diſtant places, reſorted to him; and the biſhop of Alexandria being applied to by an Arabian prince for a perſon to inſtruct him in the chriſtian faith, he made choice of Origen, in preference to any other *.

When Alexandria was ravaged by Caracalla, he went to Cæſarea in Paleſtine, and there the biſhop engaged him to expound the ſcriptures publicly in his church, though he was not then even a prieſt. This gave ſome offence to Demetrius, who inſiſted on his returning to his proper charge at Alexandria, which accordingly he did †. He made, however, two other excurſions, one at the requeſt of the empreſs Mammæa, who ſent for him to Antioch ‡, and the other to Achaia, in his way to which he was ordained prieſt at Cæſarea §. This gave ſuch offence to Demetrius that from this time he did every thing in his power to injure him, particularly by expoſing the

* Euſeb. Hiſt. Lib. vi. Cap. 19. p. 283.
† Ibid. p. 284.
‡ Ibid. p. 296.
§ Ibid. Cap. 23. p. 287.

raſh

raſh action mentioned above; though, when it was communicated to him in confidence, he had promiſed never to divulge it, and at that time did not condemn him for it, but encouraged him to apply with vigour to the duties of his profeſſion.

At firſt Demetrius got him baniſhed from Alexandria, in a council held A. D. 231, though on what pretence does not diſtinctly appear. In a ſecond council he was depoſed from the prieſthood, and excommunicated; and the ſentence was of courſe ratified by diſtant churches. Still, however, he was received at Cæſarea by Theoctiſtus biſhop of that city, and by Alexander biſhop of Jeruſalem, who were in an extraordinary manner attached to him, and undertook to defend him *. While he reſided at Cæſarea perſons flocked to him for inſtruction from great diſtances, and among others Gregory, afterwards biſhop of Neoceſarea, and his brother Athenodorus, whom he perſuaded to abandon profane literature for the ſtudy of theology. They attended his lectures five years. Firmilian alſo, biſhop of Cæſarea in Capadocia, a diſtinguiſhed character in his time, was ſo fond of Origen, that he would have perſuaded

* Euſeb. Hiſt. Lib. vi. Cap. 27. p. 292.

him to go into his province, and live with him*.

In this ſituation he compoſed his commentaries on the ſcriptures, dictating, it is ſaid, to ſeven notaries, and ſometimes more, and employing as many ſcribes to take fair copies, the expence of which was cheerfully defrayed by Ambroſius, who had been converted by him to the catholic doctrine from being a Valentinian †. When he was turned ſixty, he permitted ſcribes to copy after him as he delivered his diſcourſes to the people, which he had not done before. It was in this period of his life that he wrote his excellent books againſt Celſus, in defence of chriſtianity ‡.

In the perſecution under Maximin, Origen concealed himſelf by retiring to Athens. There, however, he was not idle, but continued to write commentaries. After this he returned to Cæſarea, and then ſpent ſome time with Firmilian in Capadocia. In the reign of Gordian he attended the Synod in Arabia againſt Berryllus, and in the reign of Phillip the other ſynod in Arabia, in which the queſ-

* Euſeb. Hiſt. Lib. vi. Cap. 27. p. 292.
† Ibid. Cap. 18. p. 278.
‡ Ibid. Cap. 36. p. 299.

tion

tion concerning the ſtate of the ſoul was diſcuſſed. In the perſecution under Decius we ſhall ſee that he ſuffered torture with great fortitude; but ſurviving it, he died a natural death in the beginning of the reign of Gallus.

Beſides commentaries on many parts of ſcripture, we have of Origen his books againſt Celſus, a treatiſe on prayer, Philoſophumena (which was probably the firſt of his books againſt hereſy) his treatiſe on *principles* in the Latin of Ruffinus, and Philocalia, or extracts from his commentaries on obſcure paſſages of ſcripture by Baſil and Gregory Nazianzen.

Ambroſe, the great friend of Origen, mentioned in the preceding account of him, wrote epiſtles addreſſed to him. Tryphon, alſo, a hearer of Origen, wrote letters addreſſed to him, and other ſmall pieces, eſpecially a treatiſe on the ſubject of the red heifer in the book of Numbers, and on Abraham's dividing the dove and the turtle *.

Minutius Felix, a lawyer at Rome, wrote a dialogue now extant, intitled, *Octavius* againſt the heathen religion. Another treatiſe on fate, or againſt the mathematicians,

* Jerom, Cap. 67. 68.

paſſed for his in the time of Jerom, but he thought the ſtile not worthy of him*.

Alexander, biſhop of Cappadocia, and afterwards of Jeruſalem, and who ſuffered martyrdom in the perſecution of Decius, wrote ſeveral epiſtles, but it does not appear that any of them were on ſubjects of much importance †.

Laſtly, Jerom ſays that Geminus, a preſbyter of Antioch, left a few monuments of his genius; but he does not ſay what they were ‡.

* Jerom, Cap. 69.
† Euſeb. Hiſt. Lib. vi. Cap. 20. p. 284. Jerom, Cap. 73.
‡ Jerom, Cap. 75.

PERIOD

PERIOD V.

FROM THE REIGN OF DECIUS, A. D. 249, TO THAT OF DIOCLETIAN, A. D. 284.

SECTION I.

Of the Perſecution by Decius.

IN the period of which I have been treating the chriſtians had enjoyed a great ſhare of repoſe, which had been favourable to the increaſe of their numbers, but by no means to their interior diſcipline, or their morals. Cyprian and other writers make great complaints with reſpect to the covetouſneſs, pride, luxury, and worldly mindedneſs of chriſtians, even of the clergy and confeſſors. Many alſo made no ſcruple of connecting themſelves by marriage with heathens, which ſhewed a great decline of zeal for their chriſtian profeſſion *. It pleaſed the divine Being,

* Cyprian, De Unitate Eccleſiæ, Opera, p. 119, and De Lapſis, p. 123.

however, to rouſe the chriſtian world from this ſtate of indifference by a more ſevere and extenſive perſecution than any of the preceding, in the reign of Decius, though it does not appear to have continued quite three years.

Decius was made emperor by the army, which had revolted againſt Philip, and perhaps becauſe his predeceſſor had favoured the chriſtians (together with ſuch other reaſons as had influenced Trajan and Marcus Antoninus) he determined, if poſſible, to extirpate them; and by appointing proper governors of provinces, and giving them ſuitable inſtructions, he took the moſt effectual method to gain his end; directing them, as may be collected from the manner in which this perſecution was conducted, to uſe every means in their power to bring the people back to the profeſſion of the ancient religion, leaving the mode of proceeding, and the kind of puniſhment, to their diſcretion*. From an expreſſion of Cyprian in his epiſtle to Antoninus [*Tyrannus infeſtus ſacerdotibus dei*] it ſhould ſeem that the violence of the perſecution was more particularly directed againſt the chriſ-

* Gregorii Nyſſen De Vita, Greg. Thaum. Opera, Vol. i. p. 999.

chriſtian clergy*, but this would naturally be thought the moſt effectual method of extirpating of chriſtianity, which the emperor had in view.

Before I relate what happened in conſequence of the ſanguinary edicts of this emperor, I ſhall give an account of ſome horrid cruelties which were exerciſed upon the chriſtians in Alexandria, in the year preceding the reign of Decius, viz. A. D. 248. It ſhews how ſubject the chriſtians were to grievous perſecution, independently of the intentions of the emperors. And as we ſhould not have had any knowledge of this perſecution in Egypt, but by means of a letter of Dionyſius the biſhop, preſerved in Euſebius, it is probable that many cruelties of a ſimilar nature were committed in other parts of the Roman empire, though they are now buried in oblivion.

Some time before any open violences were committed, a poet, whoſe name is not mentioned, had been buſy in ſtirring up the mob againſt the chriſtians, and inflaming their zeal for their ancient ſuperſtitions. Headed by this man they ſet no bounds to their outrages, but acted as if the ſervice of

* Epiſt. 55. Opera, p. 104.

their gods had conſiſted in the murder of the chriſtians. The firſt object of their vengeance was an old man of the name of Metras, who refuſing to pronounce certain words, which it was well known chriſtians would not do, they firſt beat him with clubs, then thruſt reeds into his face and eyes, and at laſt ſtoned him to death. They then dragged a chriſtian woman, of the name of Quinta, into an idol temple; and when ſhe refuſed to perform the rites of it, they tied her feet together, and dragged her through the ſtreets, which were paved with rough ſtones, and againſt mill ſtones, &c. They then ſcourged her, and taking her into the ſuburbs, they ſtoned her to death.

After this they ruſhed into the houſes of the chriſtians with whom they were acquainted; and driving them out, they plundered their goods. What was of moſt value they carried away, but things of wood, and of leſs value they broke in pieces, or burned in the ſtreets, ſo as to exhibit the appearance of a city taken and plundered by the enemy. In this tumult the chriſtians fled, *receiving with joy*, our author ſays, *the ſpoiling of their goods* *, and hitherto not more than one per-

* Heb. x. 34.

ſon who fell into the hands of the mob was induced to renounce his profeſſion.

They then ſeized upon a ſingle woman of advanced age, named Apollonia, and ſtriking her on the face they beat out her teeth. Then lighting a pile without the city, they threatened to burn her alive unleſs ſhe would pronounce certain words which they dictated to her. At firſt ſhe ſeemed to parley with them, but, fearing perhaps more ill uſuage, ſhe of her own accord ruſhed into the fire, and was burned. Having ſeized one Serapio in his own houſe, they tortured him in a cruel manner, and having broken his bones they threw him headlong out of his chamber. In ſhort, no chriſtian could appear in any public road or private path, the populace being every where clamorous to have all perſons ſeized, and thrown into the flames, who would not pronounce their words. At length the chriſtians got ſome reſpite by the furious populace quarrelling among themſelves, and exerciſing the ſame cruelties upon one another which they had done upon them.

This was a little before the dreadful edicts of Decius, which, when they arrived, filled all the chriſtians in Egypt with the greateſt conſternation. On the publication of them many

perſons of the higher ranks in life obeyed without heſitation; ſome, who were in office, doing firſt themſelves what they were appointed to require of others. Some were brought by their heathen friends and relations, and being called upon by name, joined in the ſacrifice, though many of them did it with manifeſt reluctance, ſo as to be laughed at by the byſtanders, but others boldly declared that they never had been chriſtians. Of the reſt, ſome fled, and others were apprehended. Of theſe ſome perſiſted in their profeſſion of chriſtianity, till they were confined only, and others till they were threatened with torture; but there were many on whom no threats could make any impreſſion.

The firſt of theſe was Julianus, who was ſo afflicted with the gout that he could neither walk nor ſtand, and two men who carried him. Of theſe two one recanted, but the other, together with his maſter, perſiſting in acknowledging themſelves to be chriſtians, were ſet on camels, and in that ſituation beaten through all the city, and then thrown into the fire, and conſumed, in the preſence of the whole multitude. A ſoldier called Baſas, who attended at the execution, checking thoſe who abuſed them, was by the clamour of the people brought

brought before the tribunal, and appearing to be a chriſtian, he was beheaded. Macar, a native of Lybia, after reſiſting all attempts to make him renounce his profeſſion, was ſentenced to be burned alive.

After theſe Epimachus and Alexander, when they had long borne the horrors of a priſon, and had been tortured with iron forceps, and many other ways, were burned in a lime-kiln. Four women periſhed in the ſame manner. Ammonarion, an unmarried woman, being tortured a long time in the preſence of the judge, and ſaying that nothing they could do to her would make her pronounce what they required, was ordered for execution. Mercuria, a venerable old woman, and Dionyſia, the mother of many children, and who had brought them all up in the profeſſion of chriſtianity, and alſo another Ammonarion, were then brought before the prefect; and he being aſhamed of having tortured women to no purpoſe, he ordered them to be beheaded without any previous ſuffering.

Then Heron, and Ater, and Iſidorus, all Egyptians, were brought before the judge, together with Dioſcurus, a boy about fifteen years old. The men having borne flagellation with great fortitude, were thrown into the

the fire; but the judge, having compaſſion on the boy, who diſtinguiſhed himſelf by the pertinence of his anſwers to all that was ſaid to him, and finding that neither his intreaties nor his tortures had any effect upon him, diſmiſſed him.

One Nemeſion, who had been falſely accuſed as one of a ſet of banditti, proving his innocence of that charge, but acknowledging that he was a chriſtian, was tortured twice as much as any of them, and was burned along with them. At length Ammon, Zeno, Ptolemy, and Ingenuus, together with an old man called Theophilus, all ſoldiers, who had attended theſe trials and executions, after ſhewing by their looks and geſtures their diſpleaſure at any who denied their faith, before they were apprehended or accuſed, went of their own accord to the tribunal, and acknowledged that they alſo were chriſtians. On this the prefect and his aſſiſtants were alarmed, and not chuſing to proceed any farther, permitted them to go away in triumph*.

Many others, ſays Dionyſius, were deſtroyed by the heathens in other towns and villages, of which he gives the following example. One Iſchyrion had been hired by

* Euſeb. Hiſt. Lib. vi. Cap 41. p. 308.

ſome

ſome perſon in office to do his duty for him; and being in conſequence of it ordered by his employer to ſacrifice to the idols, and refuſing, he was firſt reproached; and perſiſting in his refuſal, he was abuſed in a great variety of ways, but bearing all with wonderful patience, he was at laſt put to death by a large ſtake being driven through his body. Multitudes, he ſays, being driven into the mountains and deſart parts of the country, periſhed with hunger and thirſt, cold and diſeaſe, or by robbers or wild beaſts, an account of whom was preſerved by thoſe who ſurvived.

As an inſtance of this, he mentions the caſe of Chæremon, biſhop of Nilus, a very old man. He having fled with his wife to a mountain of Arabia, never returned; and though his brethren made diligent ſearch for him, he could never be found, alive or dead. Many others were taken in theſe mountains by the Saracens, and reduced to ſlavery; and though ſome of them recovered their liberty by ranſom, others did not. Theſe confeſſors, Dionyſius ſays, had great compaſſion for thoſe who had not been able to bear the perſecution, but had offered ſacrifice, and afterwards repented

repented of it, which was the caſe with great numbers *.

What happened to Dionyſius himſelf is not a little extraordinary. The perſon who had been ſent by Sabinus, the prefect, to apprehend him, not thinking to look for him in his own houſe, he, who had no thoughts of flying, continued there four days; but being then, he ſays, admoniſhed by God to withdraw, and a way being opened for him, he with his ſervants, and many of his chriſtian friends, went out of the city together. About ſun-ſet, however, they were all ſeized by a party of ſoldiers, and carried to Tapoſiris; but one Timothy, who happened not to be with them, eſcaped.

He going to the houſe of the biſhop, and finding him and his friends fled, and a guard in it, fled alſo in great haſte; when being met by a perſon out of the country, and being aſked by him why he fled, he told the whole ſtory; and this man happening to be going to a nuptial feaſt, which, according to cuſtom, was held in the night, told his companions; and they inſtantly ruſhing out, and attacking the guard, reſcued Dionyſius and his friends.

* Euſeb. Hiſt. Lib. vi. Cap. 42. p. 309.

But

But he, thinking them to be robbers, and being in bed, with only a linen garment on, offered them the remainder of his clothes; and when, without regarding this, they bid him riſe and follow them, he begged they would leave him, or do themſelves the office of the ſoldiers, and cut off his head. They, however, compelled him to go againſt his will, dragging him away by his hands and feet. On this, the ſoldiers being diſperſed, and he being at his liberty, four of his friends, whoſe names are mentioned, conducted him out of the village, and placing him on an aſs without any ſaddle, conveyed him to a place of ſafety *. Whither he went, he does not ſay; but it is ſuppoſed that he kept himſelf concealed till the death of Decius.

At Rome, Fabian the biſhop was put to death. In Paleſtine, Alexander biſhop of Jeruſalem, mentioned before, a man venerable for his grey hairs, being brought before the tribunal of the preſident, after having gained great honour by a former teſtimony, was ſent to priſon at Cæſarea, and died there. Babylas, biſhop of Antioch, alſo died in priſon †.

* Euſeb. Hiſt. Lib. vi. Cap. 40. p. 302.
† Ibid. Lib. vi. Cap. 39. p. 301.

Origen,

Origen, who had diſtinguiſhed himſelf ſo much among the chriſtians, and who had been ſo much noticed by the mother of the late emperor, was particularly aimed at in this perſecution, and apprehended; and though he was then advanced in life, yet ſhewing an example in himſelf of that fortitude which he had ſo early in life, and ſo often afterwards, recommended to others, he bore a great variety of tortures with invincible fortitude. He was confined in the interior part of the priſon, and there faſtened with an iron chain, and his feet ſtretched in the ſtocks to the fourth hole (which would not have been mentioned by the hiſtorian, if it had not been a ſituation exquiſitely painful) for ſeveral days. He was alſo ſubjected to various other kinds of torture, care being taken that they ſhould not abſolutely deprive him of life; and he was moreover threatened with being burned alive. But neither what he felt, nor what he was farther threatened with, at all moved him. That he ſurvived this perſecution is certain, but by what means we are not informed. He wrote ſeveral letters afterwards, highly edifying to thoſe who ſhould be brought into the ſame circumſtances*, and

* Euſeb. Hiſt. Lib. vi. Cap. 43. p. 316.

he died in the beginning of the following year, at the age of ſeventy *.

We may judge from theſe few particulars which have been preſerved of this perſecution, of the ſufferings of chriſtians in other parts of the empire. For there can be no doubt of its having been a general perſecution, as well as a very cruel one. In theſe circumſtances many real believers in chriſtianity would not have the courage to die for the profeſſion of it, and eſpecially to bear torture; and the agony of mind which many of them ſuffered afterwards moves our compaſſion, no leſs than the ſufferings of thoſe who had more courage. Dionyſius above-mentioned relates an affecting inſtance of this kind.

One Serapion, an old man, whoſe life and converſation had been unexceptionable, had been induced to ſacrifice in the time of perſecution, but he enjoyed no peace of mind when it was over, and had never ceaſed importuning the biſhops and clergy for reconciliation, but without effect. Being ſeized with an illneſs which he felt to be mortal, he ſent his little grandſon to a preſbyter, to deſire him to come to him, as he

* Ibid. Lib. vii. Cap. 1. p. 322.

was then dying. The preſbyter was ſick, and unable to go; but being well informed of the caſe, and having orders from the biſhop to abſolve penitents in the article of death, eſpecially if they had ſued for abſolution ſome time before, he ſent a bit of the euchariſtical bread by the boy, as a token of his grandfather being received into the communion of the church; and having received it, he preſently and joyfully expired*.

The biſhop who relates this, ſuppoſed that the life of the old man had been miraculouſly prolonged till he was reconciled to the church. The ſtory, however, ſhews the progreſs of ſuperſtition in the minds of chriſtians, with reſpect to the importance of church communion, and perhaps the ſanctifying virtue of the ſacramental elements themſelves. It is alſo, no doubt, a ſpecimen of the anxiety of mind of great numbers who were in the ſame ſituation, whoſe faith in the goſpel was no leſs real than that of the martyrs themſelves; ſo that by theſe alone we are by no means to judge of the number of chriſtians in this age.

* Euſeb. Hiſt. Lib. vi. Cap. 44. p. 317.

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SECTION II.

From the Acceſſion of Gallus, A. D. 251, *to the reign of Diocleſian*, A.D. 284.

DECIUS, who had taken the ſurname of Trajan, and whom he imitated in his ſucceſsful wars, as well as in his perſecution of the chriſtians, being ſlain in a battle with the Goths, who, as ſome think, were aſſiſted by the treachery of Gallus, was ſucceeded by him, and then peace was reſtored to the church, but not entirely. For Dionyſius ſays, that Gallus did not ſee the faults of his predeceſſor, but fell into the ſame himſelf, perſecuting thoſe who prayed for his proſperity, though afterwards the chriſtians were obliged to diſcontinue thoſe prayers *.

About this time there broke out a dreadful plague, which, as hiſtorians ſay, laſted ten, or even fifteen years, and made great deſtruction among mankind. Dionyſius, ſo often mentioned already, ſpeaks of it as raging in Egypt, ſo as to exceed the plague in the time

* Euſeb. Hiſt. Lib. vii. Cap. 1. p. 322.

of Moſes, when there was not a houſe in which there was not one dead. The behaviour of the chriſtians to their ſick friends in this plague was remarkably different, he ſays, from that of the heathens. For the chriſtians would not deſert thoſe who were ſeized with it, but continued to render them every kind office in their power, without dread of death; whereas the heathens fled from their ſick friends, and left them in the moſt deſtitute circumſtances *. On occaſion of this plague, Cyprian wrote his treatiſe on mortality.

Gallus, after reigning not quite two years, was killed by his own ſoldiers, and ſucceeded by Æmilian, commander of the army in Pannonia, who had revolted againſt him; and he being ſoon diſpatched in the ſame manner, was ſucceeded by Valerian the lieutenant of Gallus, who aſſociated his ſon Gallienus in the empire with him. At firſt no emperor had been more friendly to the chriſtians than Valerian. His houſe was ſo full of chriſtians, that it was compared to a church. But at the inſtigation of Macrian, and the chief of the magicians of Egypt, he began a perſecution of the chriſtians, which continued till he was

* Euſeb. Hiſt. Lib. vii. Cap. 22. p. 346.

taken

taken priſoner by the Perſians *. At the beginning, however, it ſeems to have been moderate, as the biſhops and clergy were only ſent into baniſhment.

In this perſecution Dionyſius, in whoſe letters are preſerved ſo many particulars of the former perſecution, was brought before Æmilian, the prefect of Egypt, together with a preſbyter, and three of his deacons; and on profeſſing themſelves to be chriſtians, they were baniſhed to Cephro, a ſmall village near the deſerts of Lybia. There, preaching openly to the people of the place, who were heathens, and who at firſt had been much enraged againſt them, they made many converts. On this they were ſeparated, and removed to other places, worſe, if poſſible, than the villages of Lybia. Dionyſius himſelf was ordered to remove to Colluthio, a place which, he ſays, he had never heard of before, but which, he was told, was almoſt a deſert, far from any city, and expoſed to robbers.

Perſons of both ſexes, Dionyſius ſays, and of every age and condition, ſoldiers and country people, were crowned with martyrdom, ſome by ſcourging, ſome by fire, and ſome by the ſword, though his life was ſpared.

* Euſeb. Hiſt. Lib. vii. Cap. 10. p. 331.

Many chriſtians concealed themſelves in the city, in order to aſſiſt and comfort their brethren, and take care of the bodies of thoſe who were put to death, which they did at the great hazard of their own lives. Beſides killing ſome outright, others, by the order of the preſident, were cruelly tortured, and ſome pined away in fetters and dungeons, where none were permitted to viſit them; and he took particular care that his orders were ſtrictly obeyed *. Fauſtus was a confeſſor in this perſecution along with Dionyſius, but he ſurvived, to ſuffer martyrdom in the time of Diocleſian; and was beheaded when he was very old and infirm †.

It was in this perſecution that the famous Cyprian, biſhop of Carthage, ſuffered martyrdom. In the reign of Decius he had concealed himſelf, and in his retirement wrote many letters to the people of his charge, &c. On his return to Carthage, after the perſecution, he took a very active part in the queſtion, which was then warmly agitated, concerning the terms on which the lapſed ſhould be admitted into the church, of which a more particular account will be given afterwards.

* Euſeb. Hiſt. Lib. vii. Cap. 11. p. 334.
† Ibid. p. 339.

In the beginning of the perſecution, A. D. 257, on the thirtieth of Auguſt, Cyprian was cited before Paternus the proconſul; and being required to ſacrifice to the gods of the empire, he anſwered, that he was a chriſtian, and a biſhop, and that he knew no other God beſides the true one, who made heaven and earth, the ſea, and all that is therein, the God to whom chriſtians prayed for the ſafety of the emperor. Being required to name his preſbyters, he ſaid that he ſhould not act the part of an informer. On this he was ſent into exile, to a place called Cucurbis, his deacon Pontius accompanying him. About this time, as appears by a letter of Cyprian, many chriſtians ſuffered in Africa. For one of his letters is directed to nine biſhops, who, together with preſbyters, deacons, and others, were then in the mines.

Paternus being ſucceeded by Galerius Maximus, Cyprian was recalled from his baniſhment and (probably by order of the proconſul) went to his country houſe, near Carthage, where he continued ſome time. There being many reports about the orders of the emperor with reſpect to this perſecution, Cyprian, who does not appear to have been under any reſtraint as to his correſpondence, procured an

exact account of the ſtate of the fact, which was this. The biſhops, preſbyters, and deacons, were to be put to death without delay; ſenators, perſons of quality, and Roman knights, were to be deprived of their dignities and goods; and if, after this, they perſiſted in profeſſing themſelves chriſtians, they were to be beheaded; women of rank were to be deprived of their goods, and ſent into exile; and laſtly, the emperor's freed men were to have their goods confiſcated, be ſent in chains to his lands in the country, and entered on the liſt of ſlaves to work there. Cyprian was alſo informed, that Xiſtus, biſhop of Rome, had already been put to death there, and that the prefect of the city was intent upon executing the emperor's orders.

Theſe orders ſoon arrived in Africa; and, in conſequence of them, Cyprian was again brought before the proconſul, who, on his refuſing to ſacrifice, ſpake to him with great anger, calling him an enemy to the gods, and a ſeducer of the people. After this, he pronounced his ſentence, which was, that he ſhould be beheaded; and to this Cyprian, with great magnanimity, replied, *God be praiſed*; and a multitude of chriſtians, who were preſent, cried aloud, and ſaid, *Let us be*

4 *beheaded*

beheaded with him. The ſentence was immediately after executed, after he had been permitted to kneel down and pray, in the preſence of a great croud of ſpectators (many of whom got upon the branches of trees to have a better view) on the fourteenth of September, A. D. 258 *.

In this perſecution, as was mentioned before, Xiſtus, or Sixus, biſhop of Rome, was put to death in the church, together with one Quartus, probably a preſbyter †; and Lawrence, a deacon, was roaſted before a ſlow fire, by the order of Macrian, the prefect of the city, in the abſence of Valerian. Of the latter the following account is given by Leo the Great, in his ſermon on the ſubject of this martyrdom ‡. Lawrence was not only a deacon, but almoner of the church of Rome, and it was principally with a view to get poſſeſſion of the treaſures of the church, that he was apprehended. When they were demanded of him, he pointed to a great number of poor perſons who had been fed and clothed out of it, ſo that nothing remained in his hands.

* This account is extracted from the authentic acts of the martyrdom of Cyprian, tranſlated by Dr. Lardner. Heathen Teſtimonies, Vol. ii. p. 90. and his life by Pontius, prefixed to his works.

† Cypriani Ep. 80. Opera, Epiſt. p. 238.

‡ Opera, p. 83.

The Governor, diſappointed in his expectations, required Lawrence to renounce Chriſt, threatening him, in caſe of refuſal, with the moſt dreadful torments; and when he appeared unmoved at the mention of ſome, he propoſed others ſtill more excruciating. But nothing being able to move him, he had him firſt ſhockingly torn with ſcourging, and then expoſed to the fire on ſomething like a gridiron, and ſo that different parts of his body were preſented to the fire in their turns.

Velerian being taken priſoner, Gallienus his ſon remained ſole emperor, and ſoon appeared to be a man of moderation, and well diſpoſed towards the chriſtians. By one edict he ordered the clergy to reſume their functions, and that thoſe of their poſſeſſions, which had been ſeized ſhould be reſtored to them, and by another he reſtored their churches. Gallienus not being much reſpected in the empire, his edicts were not every where obeyed, and particular governors were ſtill guilty of great cruelties; eſpecially as the laws of Trajan had never been formally repealed.

We have, in particular, an account of one Maximus, a ſoldier, who ſuffered about this time. Being about to obtain the rank of centurion, another ſoldier, who claimed it as due

to

to himſelf, accuſed him of being a chriſtian, and on that account incapable of that honour. Being interrogated by Achæus his judge, he acknowledged that he was a chriſtian, but the judge being ſenſibly affected, and very unwilling that he ſhould ſuffer, gave him three hours, in which he might conſider of a more deliberate anſwer.

Going from the Prætorium, Theotechnus, the biſhop of the city, came to him, and after ſome diſcourſe led him to the church. Then placing him near the altar, and ſhewing him his own ſword, as the inſtrument of his death, on the one hand, and the ſcriptures on the other, he bad him chuſe which he pleaſed. Deciding according to the wiſh of the biſhop, he encouraged him to perſevere; and the time being elapſed, he was again brought before the tribunal, and there ſhewing more conſtancy than before, and thereupon receiving ſentence of death, he was immediately led away and beheaded*. Aſturius, a Roman ſenator, diſtinguiſhed by his riches as well as his rank, and alſo by his zeal and courage as a chriſtian, being preſent at this execution, had the body carried away, and decently buried. Many other things, Euſebius ſays,

* Euſeb. Hiſt. Lib. vii. Cap. 15. p. 341.

3 were

were related of this Aſturius by thoſe who knew him, and who were living in his time*.

What Gallienus might not have been able to effect, had he been ever ſo well diſpoſed, in favour of the chriſtian church, was done by the diſtractions of the empire in his reign; in which thoſe who are called the thirty tyrants were every where making inſurrections, and ſetting up for themſelves. In this ſtate of peace the chriſtian church, as uſual, greatly encreaſed, numbers becoming every where more diſguſted with the rites of paganiſm.

The diſtractions of this time, and the wars between the Romans and the barbarous nations of the North, in this reign, and ſome that followed, were likewiſe eminently favourable to the ſpread of chriſtianity. For when a great number of theſe northern nations paſſed from Thrace into Aſia, committing great devaſtations, and carrying many people with them into ſervitude, many of the clergy and other zealous chriſtians were among the captives, and exerted themſelves in the converſion of the people among whom they were ſettled. In conſequence of theſe events we find that, in the time of Conſtantine, the knowledge of chriſtianity was ex-

* Euſeb. Hiſt. Lib. vii. Cap. 16. p. 342.

tended

tended to many of theſe nations, as thoſe beyond the Rhine, the Celtæ, the Goths, and the nations bordering on the Danube *.

Aurelian, who ſucceeded Gallienus, appears to have been ſuperſtitious; as he gave orders for conſulting the Sybilline books, and reproached the ſenate with their indifference about that matter, as if, ſays he, they held their conſultations in a chriſtian church, and not in the temple of the gods †. He did not, however, at firſt take any active part againſt the chriſtians; and when he was in the Eaſt, and was appealed to about the property of the epiſcopal houſe at Antioch, he condeſcended to hear the parties, and decided in favour of that perſon to whom a ſynod of the neighbouring biſhops had aſſigned it. "Thus," ſays Euſebius, "was he affected towards us at "that time. Afterwards, at the inſtigation "of others, he raiſed a perſecution againſt us, "which excited much alarm; but he had no "ſooner prepared his edict for that purpoſe, "than he died by a conſpiracy againſt him in "the army ‡." From this time to that of Diocleſian it does not appear that there was

* Sozomeni Hiſt. Lib. ii. Cap. 6. p. 52.
† Vopiſci Aurel. Cap. 20. p. 852.
‡ Euſeb. Hiſt. Lib. vii. Cap. 30. p. 364.

any

any conſiderable perſecution of the chriſtians. None is mentioned by Euſebius, though, as the laws againſt them were not repealed, it is very probable that they might ſuffer in various places. There are, indeed, accounts of many martyrs in the Martyrology, but the authority of this work is not very great.

SECTION III.

Of the Treatment of Penitents, and the Origin of the Novatians.

On the termination of the perſecution by Decius, we ſee the progreſs that ſuperſtition had made in the minds of many chriſtians. This perſecution had been preceded by a long ſtate of comparative reſt, attended, as has always been the caſe, with a proportionable lukewarmneſs with reſpect to religion; ſo that when the chriſtians were ſuddenly called upon to renounce their religion, or reſign their poſſeſſions, their liberty, or their lives, and generally to ſuffer torture alſo, great numbers were unable to ſtand the trial.

Some

Some complied without much heſitation with the demands of the governors to ſacrifice to the heathen gods; but others thought to ſatisfy their conſciences by eluding thoſe demands; and this they did in various ways, but more eſpecially by procuring, by intereſt or by money, certificates of their having ſacrificed, though they had not done it.

Though theſe perſons had not firmneſs enough to die for their religion, they did not therefore diſbelieve it; and many of them, when they had recovered from their firſt conſternation, and had felt the pangs of remorſe, openly renounced their recantations, or gave up their certificates, and cheerfully ſuffered the extremity of the law. And the reſt, when the danger was over, earneſtly wiſhed to be received into the boſom of the church by ſatisfying the demands of its regular officers, thinking that their eternal ſalvation depended upon it, and that without this no repentance, or contrition, would avail them in the ſight of God.

According to the eſtabliſhed forms of church diſcipline in thoſe times, the *peace of the church*, as it was called, or a reſtoration to communion with it, could not be given to any perſon without the conſent of the biſhop, together with that of the other clergy and the people;

people; though when the biſhops were reſpected, their influence would naturally be very great, and almoſt deciſive. Hence they were inceſſantly teized by the lapſed, and recourſe was had to every poſſible method of gaining their favour; but nothing was ſo effectual as the recommendation of a martyr or a confeſſor; any perſon being then conſidered as a *martyr* on whom ſentence of death had been paſſed, eſpecially if he had ſuffered torture, or any other puniſhment; and he was a *confeſſor* who had acknowledged himſelf to be a chriſtian before a heathen tribunal, though no puniſhment had actually followed.

The martyrs had, no doubt, great merit; but in this age ſomething muſt be deducted from it on account of the ſuperſtitious reſpect that was paid to them. They were almoſt idolized by their fellow chriſtians, both before and after their deaths; and when they ſurvived torture, or the mines, &c. the homage that was paid to them could not fail to hurt their minds, though they had naturally been ever ſo good. Accordingly, many of them were intoxicated with the applauſe which they received, and often made an improper uſe of the influence which they acquired.

But

But though, on this account, the temper of mind with which ſome endured martyrdom might be very unlike that with which Chriſt ſuffered, and therefore could not be ſaid to be a proof of a truly chriſtian character, it was a proof of their firm belief of the truth of chriſtianity, and conſequently affords to us the ſame evidence of it.

It having grown into an eſtabliſhed cuſtom, that the recommendation of a confeſſor, and eſpecially that of a martyr, ſhould entitle any perſon, without farther enquiry, to chriſtian communion, the diſcipline of the church was greatly relaxed by the indiſcreet eaſe with which they often granted their tickets of recommendation. They would not only give them to perſons of whoſe repentance they were not well aſſured, but ſometimes to a particular perſon and his friends, without diſtinguiſhing who they were. Some, before they died, would even leave it in charge to their friends, to grant the peace of the church in their names to all who ſhould apply for it; ſo that it muſt have been thought that martyrdom operated to expiate the ſins of others, as well as thoſe of the martyr himſelf. Nay, it appears that theſe tickets were ſometimes bought

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and ſold, not perhaps in the firſt inſtance, but by thoſe to whom they had been granted.

Theſe abuſes were ſenſibly and ſtrenuouſly oppoſed by Cyprian, who, from the place of his concealment in the former perſecution, wrote the moſt earneſt letters to the martyrs and confeſſors, to his own clergy, and the people, and alſo to the church of Rome, on the ſubject. For the idea of the neceſſity of an uniform diſcipline in all the great ſees, which was productive of much evil afterwards, was by this time firmly eſtabliſhed; ſo that a ſimple notification of communion with any one church, was a ſufficient recommendation to any other; and for the ſame reaſon excommunication from any church was an excommunication from them all; diſtant churches ſeldom thinking it neceſſary to examine into the grounds of proceeding in other churches, as we have ſeen in the caſe of Origen.

To oppoſe this baneful influence of the martyrs and confeſſors, Cyprian urged that the care of the church was committed by Chriſt to the apoſtles, and by them to the ordinary biſhops and clergy, who were reſponſible for their conduct in it; and he reſolutely refuſed

refuſed to receive any certificates without reſtriction and examination. It was admitted, however, by him, as well as by others, that in the article of death, the badge of communion ſhould not be withheld from any who had profeſſed repentance, as it was neceſſary to their dying in peace.

Theſe laudable efforts of Cyprian were aided, and rendered effectual, by letters from the clergy, and even the confeſſors, at Rome, addreſſed to the church of Carthage, and to Cyprian himſelf; ſo that we hear no more of this groſs abuſe in any ſubſequent perſecution, and probably it was no where very great except in Africa only.

It is no uncommon thing for one extreme to produce another. At the ſame time that there were ſo many juſt complaints of the relaxation of diſcipline, in conſequence of the improper interference of the confeſſors, others at the head of whom was Novatus, a preſbyter at Rome, and a learned and reſpectable man, maintained that they who had apoſtatized ought not on any terms, and whatever profeſſions they might make of repentance, be reſtored to the peace of the church*; and on this principle he made himſelf the

* Euſeb. Hiſt. Lib. vi. Cap. 43. p. 310.

head of a new ſect called *Cathari*, on account of their profeſſing greater purity than others. This Novatus had firſt ſeparated from the church of Rome, of which he was a preſbyter, and had procured himſelf, as it is ſaid, to be elected biſhop, in oppoſition to Cornelius, whoſe election he had oppoſed, and which he pretended was invalid. However, he was joined by ſeveral biſhops in Italy, and by ſome confeſſors, which in that age was deemed a great acquiſition; but his friends were moſt numerous in Africa, though he did not ſucceed in his attempts to get the concurrence of Cyprian.

In this he failed, in part perhaps, on account of Novatus being joined by another Novatus, a preſbyter of the church of Carthage, who had had ſome difference with Cyprian, and who, in oppoſition to him, had ordained Feliciſſimus a deacon, in a ſeparate congregation in which he preſided. For this, and other crimes which were laid to his charge, but of which no proof appears, Cyprian propoſed to have him excommunicated, but the breaking out of the perſecution put a ſtop to the proceedings.

In the abſence of Cyprian, Novatus and Feliciſſimus ſtrengthened their party againſt

him, and though at his return he procured the expulſion of Feliciſſimus and his friends; they, deſpiſing the ſentence, formed a new church in Carthage, and choſe for the biſhop one Fortunatus, a preſbyter who had been included in the ſentence of excommunication*. We do not, however, hear any thing more of this ſchiſm, and probably thoſe of whom it conſiſted joined the party of the Roman Novatus, whoſe diſciples ſoon formed ſeparate churches in all parts of the chriſtian world.

To decide concerning him and his principles, a ſynod was called at Rome, conſiſting of ſixty biſhops, and a much greater number of the inferior clergy; and in this Novatus and his party were excommunicated, and his opinion condemned. A ſynod was alſo held at Carthage on the ſame ſubject, in which Cyprian preſided; and in this the ſentence of the ſynod at Rome was confirmed, and particular rules were agreed upon relating to the admiſſion of penitents, according to the nature and degree of their guilt; and among theſe it was determined, that the clergy who

* Theſe particulars of the proceedings in Africa, I take from Moſheim (De Rebus Chriſtianorum Ante Conſtantinum, p. 497, &c.) who collected them from the letters of Cyprian, and who does not altogether approve the conduct of this biſhop in the buſineſs.

had apoſtatized in the time of perſecution, ſhould only be reſtored to communion as laymen.

Euſebius gives us on this occaſion a letter from Cæcilius to Fabius, biſhop of Antioch, in which he draws a moſt frightful picture of Novatus, and of his conduct, in procuring himſelf to be elected biſhop, and the method he took to keep his friends attached to him; but it has too much the appearance of invective and calumny. As the Novatians boaſted that the founder of their ſect was a martyr, it is probable that he was one, and that he ſuffered in the reign of Valerian, as Cæcilius his opponent, did in the time of Gallus*.

By this letter it appears that there were in the church of Rome at this time forty-four preſbyters, ſeven deacons, as many ſub-deacons, and fifty-two officers of inferior kinds, more than one hundred and fifty widows, ſick perſons, or poor, who were maintained out of the funds of the church; and the common people are ſaid to be innumerable†.

* Cypriani Ep. p. 181. Socratis Hiſt. Lib. iv. Cap. 28. p. 250.

† Euſeb. Hiſt. Lib. vi. Cap. 43. p. 310.

There

There is alſo in Euſebius an excellent letter of Dionyſius biſhop of Alexandria to Novatus, reproving him for making a ſchiſm in the church, and exhorting him to reſtore its union *. In another letter he condemns the harſhneſs of Novatus and his friends, eſpecially with reſpect to their treatment of penitents, and their rebaptizing thoſe who quitted the communion of the catholic church to join them, as if their former baptiſm had been of no effect †.

It muſt be obſerved, however, that the Novatians did not maintain that all thoſe who had once apoſtatized would be excluded from heaven. On the contrary, they encouraged their repentance, but left them to the judgment of God, keeping their own church pure from ſo great a ſtain as they conſidered apoſtacy, and probably other great offences to be. They alſo thought that no other church could be deemed pure, or its ordinances valid, which admitted ſuch improper members. It is very poſſible, therefore, that many perſons of the moſt exemplary piety and virtue might chuſe to join a church which profeſſed ſuch great ſtrictneſs.

* Euſeb. Hiſt. Lib. vi. Cap. 45. p. 318.
† Ibid. Lib. vii. Cap. 8. p. 328.

The ſect of Novatians continued till after the middle of the fifth century, and their maxim of rebaptizing thoſe who joined them from other churches, was adopted by the Donatiſts. Cyprian and the biſhops of Africa had no reaſon to complain of the Novatians for rebaptizing thoſe who joined them from other churches; ſince they had given it as their ſolemn opinion that all heretics ſhould be rebaptized, and ſince the Novatians were conſidered as heretics by the catholics, they would, no doubt, conſider *them* in the ſame light.

The queſtion about rebaptizing heretics was at this very time agitated with great earneſtneſs in Africa; and a council on the ſubject was held at Carthage, A. D. 215. In this Cyprian preſided, and it was unanimouſly determined that the baptiſm of heretics ſhould be conſidered as invalid, and in this he had the concurrence of Firmilian, and probably that of the eaſtern churches in general; who, in a council held at Iconium in Phrygia, conſiſting of the biſhops of Galatia, Cilicia, and the neighbouring provinces, agreed that heretics ſhould not be received into the church without being rebaptized. This we learn from the epiſtle of Firmilian in the works of Cyprian,

Cyprian *. To ſhew that baptiſm in all the uſual forms could not always be conſidered as valid, or have the effects of a real baptiſm, he mentions a caſe of its being adminiſtered by a woman out of her ſenſes, or, as he thought, actuated by a dæmon, probably one of the Montaniſts, who were often conſidered in that light. "Could the remiſſion of ſins and re-"generation," he ſays, "be given by ſuch "a baptiſm." In this we ſee the ſuperſtition of this good man, and of the times.

In this epiſtle Firmilian anſwers what had been alleged by Stephen biſhop of Rome, who not only oppoſed the rebaptizing of heretics, but had excommunicated the African churches for doing it †, and he alleges among other things that the church of Rome had not in all things kept to the ancient and apoſtolical practices, as with reſpect to the celebration of Eaſter and other things.

Afterwards it came to be a received maxim, and was confirmed by the council of Nice, that if the heretics had uſed the proper form of baptiſm, that is, if they had baptized *in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy*

* Epiſt. p. 221.

† Rumpens adverſus vos pacem, Cypriani Opera, p. 220.

 Ghoſt,

Ghoſt, it ſhould be deemed valid, and therefore ſhould not be repeated; it being thought impious to treat a real ſacrament as if it had no virtue in it; ſuch was the ſuperſtition with which this rite was then conſidered.

This opinion, however was not always able to give ſatisfaction to perſons of a timorous diſpoſition, who were afraid they had not received the true baptiſm. Dionyſius of Alexandria deſcribes a caſe of this kind, with reſpect to which he appears not to have known how to act, in a letter to Xiſtus biſhop of Rome. A perſon who had been baptized by ſome heretics (of what denomination is not mentioned) applied to him to be rebaptized, uſing the moſt earneſt entreaties for that purpoſe; and though he told him that he could not regularly do it, and that in his opinion the communion of the Lord's ſupper, to which he would be admitted, might ſatisfy him, he ſtill had the greateſt dread of communicating in thoſe circumſtances, as one of the *unworthy perſons* mentioned by Paul, who *eat and drink damnation to themſelves*. It was even with great difficulty that this perſon could be prevailed upon to attend the prayers which accompanied the celebration of the euchariſt. Dionyſius writes

to

to the biſhop of Rome, to know what he ſhould do in ſuch a caſe as this*. What anſwer Xiſtus returned, does not appear. Indeed, I do not ſee how they could ſatisfy the ſcruples of this man, in whoſe mind the opinions of divines, and even of councils, ſeems to have had but little weight.

There were two caſes reſpecting the baptiſm of heretics, one that of thoſe who had always been ſuch, and the other that of thoſe who had left the catholic church, to join any heretical ſociety; and to the former more favour was ſhewn than to the latter. But Dionyſius ſays, he had learned of his predeceſſor Heraclas, to receive both without rebaptizing; becauſe they had already received the Holy Spirit †, as if that was the neceſſary conſequence of baptiſm in the proper form. At the ſame time, this excellent man repreſents the deciſion of the African churches as no new thing, but as the ſame with that of the churches of Aſia at Iconium and Synnada, long before; and ſeems to intimate, that what had once been ſettled on a ſubject of this nature, in any place, ſhould not be altered, quot-

* Euſeb. Hiſt. Lib. vii. Cap. 9. p. 329.

† Some MSS. have not the word *ſpirit*; and, according to them, Dionyſius only ſaid, that they had already received a *holy*, or true *baptiſm*.

ing the law of Moſes, *Thou ſhalt not remove the land-mark;* at leaſt, that they ſhould not be diſturbed by other churches on that account *. This was acting with the moderation of a chriſtian, and a lover of peace. Jerom repreſents him as agreeing in opinion with Cyprian and the African churches.

All the eccleſiaſtical hiſtorians make great lamentations on account of the ſchiſm that was made in the chriſtian church by the Novatians, whoſe difference from the catholics reſpected matters of diſcipline only. On the contrary, I cannot help thinking that this breach in the unity of the chriſtian church in that age, and other ſimilar breaches at other times, have had a very happy effect upon the whole.

Beſides promoting free inquiry and diſcuſſion, without which no ſubject can be well underſtood, and which is neceſſary to give a general confidence in what ſhall be afterwards acquieſced in, ſects were the means of preventing that overbearing authority which, the whole chriſtian church united, could not have failed to have, and which, if there had been no place of retreat from its power, would have been inſupportable. What would have

* Euſeb. Hiſt. Lib. vi. Cap. 8. p. 327

been the terror of an excommunication from ſuch a church, and how would it have been poſſible to correct any abuſe in ſuch circumſtances?

That families and friends ſhould have been divided, and that thoſe diviſions ſhould have been the cauſe of ſo much animoſity as often took place on theſe occaſions, is, no doubt, to be lamented. But this was an evil that did not neceſſarily ariſe from ſects in religion, but only from that unreaſonable ſpirit of bigotry in men, which could not bear with patience that others ſhould think or act differently from them; that very bigotry, which a number of ſects, and their neceſſary conſequences, can alone cure. Private animoſity was an evil inſeparable from the promulgation of chriſtianity itſelf, and was diſtinctly foretold by our Saviour.

The excellent character of many of the Novatian biſhops, we ſhall find to have been of great uſe in exciting the emulation of the catholic biſhops, and in checking that abuſe of power, and other irregularities, which would have diſgraced chriſtianity infinitely more than theſe diviſions which are ſo much complained of. The ſchiſm made by Luther, ſo much oppoſed and lamented at the time,

has

has been a means of reforming the church of Rome itſelf; and the benefit which the eſtabliſhed church of England derives from the Diſſenters is too apparent to be denied by any man of cool obſervation. It has been acknowledged by the Engliſh clergy themſelves. But eccleſiaſtical hiſtorians have been ſtruck with the immediate and temporary evils ariſing from the diviſion of the chriſtian church by numerous ſects and parties, and have not ſufficiently reflected on the more remote, but neceſſary, and highly beneficial uſes of them.

SECTION IV.

Of the Origin of the Monks.

THE perſecution of Decius, which fell particularly heavy on Egypt, gave occaſion to the riſe of another ſpecies of ſuperſtition, which from ſmall beginnings extended itſelf over the whole chriſtian world, and which, with ſome good, was productive of much evil, ſo as to make a very important period in the hiſtory of the chriſtian church.

I mean

I mean that ſpecies of ſuperſtition, under the influence of which perſons have thought there was a real merit in bodily auſterity, and in excluding themſelves from the common comforts and enjoyments of life, eſpecially in leading ſingle lives, and being in all reſpects as far removed as poſſible from all commerce with the world.

It is evident that nothing of this kind was preſcribed by Chriſt, or the apoſtles. Every perſon is by them ſuppoſed to live in ſociety, and is exhorted to do the duties of it, and to be uſeful in it. Celibacy is, indeed, recommended by the apoſtle Paul, but only for prudential reaſons, as ſubjecting men to leſs inconvenience in time of difficulty and perſecution; and the ſtate of marriage is always ſpoken of as honourable. Nor does it appear that, even in this age, any chriſtian adopted this new mode of life on the principles on which it was recommended afterwards. The firſt hermits were men who had been driven by perſecution to a diſtance from cities; and being obliged to conceal themſelves in deſert places, far from human ſociety, but being able to ſubſiſt (either from the natural fruits of the ground, their own labour, or the charity of others) they by degrees acquired a fondneſs

neſs for it; and their ſatisfaction in it would, no doubt, be increaſed by the reſpect that was paid them, on account of their great ſanctity, as men who had abandoned the world, and all the enjoyments of it, for the ſake of religion; ſo that they were conſidered in the ſame light as martyrs and confeſſors; and ſuch ſome of them were. The ſame idea of ſanctity was by degrees transferred to thoſe who choſe the ſociety of the original hermits, who relieved their wants in their rigid mode of life, and were induced to adopt the ſame themſelves. At firſt alſo they did not make any vows, by which they bound themſelves either to live ſingle lives, or renounce the world in any reſpect; but they mixed with it, whenever they thought they could do it with ſafety to themſelves, or advantage to others.

Beſides the habit of living in ſolitude, to which the chriſtians were driven by perſecution, ſome maxims, which had their origin in heatheniſm, greatly contributed to recommend this auſtere mode of life. The doctrine of *a ſoul*, as an immaterial ſubſtance diſtinct from the body, and capable of ſubſiſting in a ſtate of much greater perfection and happineſs without it, which was firſt adopted by the

the heathen philoſophers, was by this time almoſt univerſally received among chriſtians; and from this fruitful principle, among other conſequences highly unfavourable to genuine chriſtianity, there ſoon aroſe the idea of endeavouring to detach the ſoul from the body as much as poſſible, even during their connexion, which was always thought to be unfavourable to the ſpiritual part of man, and neceſſarily to contaminate it. Every thing, therefore, which tended to reconcile the ſoul to its fleſhly tabernacle, ſuch as ſenſual indulgences of all kinds, even thoſe which had always been deemed innocent, was to be carefully avoided. Whatever tended to mortify the body was conceived to be for the advantage of the ſoul; and the ſtate the neareſt to this ideal perfection was thought to be that in which life could be ſupported with the feweſt enjoyments, or corporeal gratifications poſſible. Even thoſe of the eye and the ear, which were always deemed to be the moſt refined of corporeal pleaſures, were reprobated.

At the ſame time that the ancient heathen religions allowed, upon ſome occaſions, the groſſeſt ſenſual indulgences, in other caſes they impoſed acts of the greateſt rigour, and

required

required the moſt coſtly ſacrifices; ſome of their gods being of ſuch a diſpoſition, that it was thought nothing elſe would conciliate them. Hence many of the heathen prieſts, who devoted themſelves to the peculiar ſervice of theſe gods, ſubmitted to great mortifications, as faſting, &c. and performed upon themſelves the moſt painful operations, ſuch as cutting their fleſh, &c. to ſay nothing of their human ſacrifices, and the moſt ſhocking cruelties committed upon others. Some of the male prieſts caſtrated themſelves, and the women devoted themſelves to a ſtate of virginity. All theſe things had been deemed acts of heroiſm, and without the leaſt regard to moral virtue, had been thought to recommend men to the favour of the gods.

In theſe things, unfortunately, the chriſtians vied with the heathens, being aſhamed not to be able to make as great ſacrifices to true religion, as any perſons had ever done to falſe ones. Hence ſome chriſtian hermits ſeemed to have emulated the ſeverities of the Indian Faquirs, making a merit of the mere enduring of pain, and of the renunciation of all the comforts and enjoyments of life.

Laſtly, the Pythagorean and Platonic philoſophers, whoſe writings the learned chriſ-

tians

tians chiefly ſtudied, thought that, by the force of contemplation, they could, in a great meaſure, detach the ſoul from the body, and thus re-aſcend to that ſtate of *union with God*, which all ſouls were ſuppoſed to have had before they were ſeparated from that one great ſource of intelligence, and in which they expected to be abſorbed, after undergoing a ſtate of diſcipline in this lower world; and the reveries they naturally fell into in a ſtate of long ſilence and ſolitude, to which, for this purpoſe, they ſometimes gave themſelves up (a ſtate in which they were hardly ſenſible of the preſence of any material objects) they imagined to be this detached and exalted condition of the ſoul, ſuch as it would attain to in an unembodied ſtate.

Chriſtians deeply tinctured with theſe notions, thought that *prayer* would greatly aſſiſt in this grand operation, and do more for them than mere *meditation* could for the heathen philoſophers. Hence, to the moſt mortified ſtate that the body could bear, they added the mental exerciſes of inceſſant meditation and prayer; and this indolent contemplative mode of life they imagined to be the moſt perfect that human nature was capable of in this world.

But as it was neceſſary for the preſervation of mankind, that ſome perſons ſhould marry, and do the common offices of human life, and therefore theſe things could not be abſolutely ſaid to be ſinful, chriſtians followed the heathen philoſophers in adopting the idea of *two claſſes of men*, the *operative*, and the *contemplative*, and of the great inferiority of the former to the latter. Thoſe perſons who performed theſe common offices of life, and partook of the common enjoyments of it, feeling a natural reluctance to the idea of abandoning them, were eaſily led to form the idea of the ſuperior *excellence*, as well as of the greater *difficulty*, of a ſtate of mortification, and were glad to miniſter to all the wants of the contemplative order of chriſtians, from the benefit they hoped to derive from their prayers, which they conceived to be far more meritorious and effectual than their own.

Thus did heathen maxims, in the moſt ſpecious and leaſt ſuſpected manner, introduce themſelves into chriſtianity, and debaſe the genuine ſpirit of it; and by this means were men gradually led to place the greateſt merit in things that had no relation to moral virtue. And what was of ſtill worſe conſequence, mankind having, as they thought,

this ſure way of making themſelves acceptable to God, were too apt to neglect any other, and even thought to make atonement for their vices by thoſe auſterities, or thoſe donations which were thought to be equivalent to them. For it has been univerſally obſerved, that the prevalence of ſuperſtition has always been attended with a proportional diſregard of moral virtue.

The duties of ſuperſtition have this to recommend them, that it is eaſily known when they are diſcharged; whereas the moral improvement of the temper and diſpoſition of mind is a leſs definite, and more uncertain thing, ſo as to be leſs eaſily eſtimated. And when a man is perſuaded that he can ſecure his future ſalvation by faſting, by penance, or by money, he will generally acquieſce in it, rather than have recourſe to that conſtant attention to his heart and life, which true chriſtianity requires.

Notwithſtanding this injury done to chriſtianity by the maxims of heatheniſm, there was ſomething in it, and inſeparable from it, which preſerved it from that deplorably wretched and contemptible ſtate in which mere heatheniſm left men. Moral precepts, eſpecially thoſe of humility, meekneſs, bene-

volence, and heavenly mindedneſs, are ſo frequently inculcated in the goſpel, that they could not be wholly overlooked. Conſequently, almoſt all the orders of monks, notwithſtanding the time they gave to meditation and prayer, and the ſeverities they exerciſed upon themſelves, practiſed ſome acts of beneficence, and ſtudied to be uſeful to the world; not to obſerve that their reading of the ſcriptures, and prayers, together with their habitual endeavours to raiſe their minds above this world, and to prepare themſelves, in their way, for another (about which the heathens knew nothing at all) would render them, perſonally conſidered, ſuperior characters to any that mere heatheniſm could produce. And, indeed, it is evident that, in the early ages (in the middle ages too, and, I believe, at the preſent time alſo) the generality of monks, notwithſtanding the factious diſpoſition of ſome, and the hypocriſy and ſecret ſenſuality of others, have lived very innocent lives, and many of them highly uſeful ones, eſpecially by their application to literature.

For it muſt not be forgotten, that it is to the monks that we are indebted for a great part of what now remains of the learning of the ancients. The northern nations, which

overwhelmed the Roman empire, had been previouſly converted to chriſtianity; and the reſpect which they had for monks and monaſteries, made thoſe places a valuable and happy aſylum for letters. It was alſo happy that, in a time of ſuch general confuſion as that in which all the ſtates in Europe were for ſeveral centuries involved, there was any place of ſafe retreat for thoſe who were diſguſted with the world, and wiſhed to retire from it, whether they were driven thither by remorſe for their own crimes, or by the violence of others.

The firſt hermits that we read of were ſome who took refuge in Upper Egypt, or Thebais, during the perſecution of Decius, remote from Alexandria and the ſea-coaſt; and one Paul is mentioned, as a perſon who diſtinguiſhed himſelf the moſt by his ſolitary life in that country. It is ſaid by Jerom, who writes his life, that being heir to a great patrimony, his ſiſter's huſband, in order to get poſſeſſion of it, informed againſt him, and that upon this he fled to the mountainous parts of Thebais, where he was ſafe from his purſuers. This place, however, he quitted ſeveral times; but at length, finding a convenient cavern in a rock, he lived there ninety

years, dying at the age of one hundred and thirteen. We ſhall have occaſion enough to ſpeak of the followers of this Paul in the ſucceeding periods of this hiſtory.

SECTION V.

Of Unitarianiſm in this Period.

WE have ſeen that unitarianiſm was the belief of all the chriſtian world during the age of the apoſtles, and till the time of Juſtin Martyr, when he, and ſome other Platonic philoſophers, being converted to chriſtianity, mixed their peculiar notions with it. In this they acted with perfect integrity, though they were, no doubt, biaſſed more than they themſelves were aware of, by the flattering idea of repreſenting their religion to themſelves, and others, in a more reſpectable light than that of the doctrine of a man who had been crucified. They therefore held that Chriſt was not a mere man, but that the *logos*, the power and wiſdom of the one ſupreme God, had been, in ſome ineffable manner, emitted from him, ſo as to become a diſtinct

diſtinct perſon; and that this logos was ſo united to Jeſus, that by virtue of it he was intitled to the appellation of *God*.

Still, however, not to alarm the common people, who juſtly dreaded the doctrine of *a ſecond God*, they always ſpoke of Chriſt, though a God, yet as greatly inferior to the Father, as having derived every thing from him, who was alone [αναρχος] *without origin*, and intirely ſubſervient to his will. They were alſo far from moleſting the common people, who retained the plain doctrine of one God, and who conſidered Chriſt as a man inſpired by God. Thinking themſelves much ſuperior to them in knowledge, they rather deſpiſed them for their weakneſs, and their incapacity to comprehend this ſublime doctrine which they had imbibed.

In this light Origen always exhibits his own opinion and theirs. "There are," ſays he*, "who partake of the logos which was "from the beginning, the logos that was with "God, and the logos that was God——but "there are others who know nothing but Jeſus "Chriſt, and him crucified, the logos that "was made fleſh, thinking they have every "thing of the logos when they acknowledge

* Comment. in Johan. Vol. ii. p. 49.

" Chriſt according to the fleſh. Such is the " multitude of thoſe who are called chriſ- " tians." Again, he ſays *, " the multi- " tudes," that is, the great maſs or body, " of " the believers are inſtructed in the ſhadow " of the logos, and not in the true logos of " God." That Tertullian conſidered the greater part of chriſtians as dreading the doctrine of the trinity in his time, and as adhering ſtrictly to that of the ſole monarchy of God the Father, we have ſeen already. Unfortunately, the writings of all the ancient unitarians are loſt. But ſtill there is evidence ſufficient of there having been writers who maintained their opinion againſt the learned Platoniſts. Beryllus is ſaid to have been an elegant writer. Artemon and Theodotus, in the preceding period, were alſo writers, and they had many admirers.

In the period of which I am now treating, the platonizing biſhops were unqueſtionably more numerous than any other; and to this the ſchool of Alexandria, and the reputation of Origen, had probably contributed; the moſt eminent of the biſhops having been the diſciples of Origen, ſuch as Dionyſius of Alexandria, Gregory of Neocæſarea, and Fir-

* Comment. in Johan. vol. ii. p 52.

milian

milian of Cappadocia. It is probable, however, that theſe men, eſpecially the two laſt, retained the moderation, as well as the doctrine, of Origen on this ſubject. For they were far from proceeding with the deciſion and violence of the catholics of a later period, when the unitarian doctrine came before them.

Thoſe who incurred cenſure for holding the unitarian doctrine in this period were Noetus of Smyrna or Epheſus, Sabellius in Africa, and Paulus Samoſatenſis biſhop of Antioch. Noetus is not mentioned by Euſebius; but Epiphanius and others ſpeak of him as the head of a ſect, who were called Noetians after him. He probably flouriſhed not long after, A. D. 220, and what he wrote on the ſubject was replied to by Hippolytus. But neither the work of Noetus, nor that of his anſwerer, are now extant. At leaſt the genuineneſs of the tract which goes under the name of Hippolytus is queſtioned. Noetus, perſiſting in his opinions, was expelled from the church of which he was a member, together with thoſe who were of the ſame opinion with him; and Predeſtinatus ſays that he was alſo condemned by Tranquillus biſhop of Chalcedon in Syria*.

* Lardner's Works, Vol. iii. p. 12.

There

There are, however, ſo many improbable circumſtances in Epiphanius's account of Noetus, and alſo of his brother (ſuch as his pretending that he was Moſes, and his brother Aaron, and that when they died the orthodox refuſed to bury them*) that there is but little to be depended upon in what he ſays concerning him and his followers, except that they were unitarians. Theodoret ſays, that Noetus was the diſciple of Epigonus, and that he was followed by Cleomenes†.

Euſebius ſays but little of Sabellius, who is ſuppoſed to have publiſhed thoſe writings which gave offence to the orthodox, as they called themſelves, about A. D. 255, or 256, and which were anſwered by Dionyſius of Alexandria in 257, or 258. So many biſhops of Africa were then unitarians, that Athanaſius ſays, "the Son of God," meaning his divinity, "was ſcarcely any longer preached "in the churches;" and Sabellius was ſo diſtinguiſhed a perſon, that the unitarians went by his name even in the time of Auſtin, though in general it had given place to that of Photinians, from Photinus biſhop of Sirmium, and a much more eminent writer. So

* Hær. 57. Opera, Vol. i. p. 480.

† Hær. Fab. Lib. iii. Cap. 3. Opera, Vol. iv. p. 227.

popular

popular was unitarianiſm in this age, that, according to Epiphanius when the unitarians met with any of the plainer chriſtians, they would ſay, "Well friend, what doctrine ſhall "we hold, ſhall we acknowledge one God, or "three." By this ſhort and plain argument, he acknowledged that they gained the pious and plain people to join them *.

Noetus, if Epiphanius may be credited, was excommunicated from his own church, of which, as he was a writer, it is probable that he might be a preſbyter; but it is remarkable that, though Sabellius was much more known, and his opinions generally prevailed, at leaſt in Africa, there was no council called on his account, no examination of his opinions, nor any public cenſure of them; when a preceding biſhop of Alexandria had called a council for the purpoſe of condemning Origen. It does not appear that any application whatever was ever made to Sabellius himſelf by any chriſtian biſhop or writer. All that we hear of, as written againſt his opinions, is a letter of Dionyſius of Alexandria, addreſſed to Xiſtus biſhop of Rome, Ammon

* Hær. 62. Opera, Vol. i. p. 514.

biſhop

biſhop of Berenice, and four books addreſſed to Dionyſius another biſhop of Rome*.

It is perhaps no leſs remarkable that, notwithſtanding the blaſphemous opinions, as they are commonly called, of which the Trinitarians accuſed Sabellius, no immorality appears to have been laid to his charge. It may therefore be ſafely inferred that his moral character and conduct were unexceptionable. And ſince no public cenſure was paſſed upon him, it may alſo be inferred, either that his opinions were not conſidered as very obnoxious, or that his friends were ſo many, that his enemies had no proſpect of ſucceſs in any meaſures that they might take againſt him.

Paul, a native of Samoſata, was biſhop of Antioch, twelve or thirteen years, in the time of the celebrated Zenobia, with whom he was a great favourite. Making allowance for prejudice and exaggeration, Dr. Lardner thinks that, from what Euſebius and others have ſaid of him †, we may draw the following character. "He had a great mind, with "a mixture of haughtineſs, and too much af-

* Euſeb. Hiſt. Lib. vii. Cap. 26. p. 356.
† Ibid. Lib. vii. Cap. 27. p. 257, &c.

"fection

" fection for human applauſe. He was generally well reſpected in his dioceſe, and by " the neighbouring biſhops; in eſteem with " the great, and beloved by the common people. He preached frequently, and was a " good ſpeaker; and from what is ſaid by " the Fathers of the council of his rejecting " and laying aſide ſome hymns as modern, " and compoſed by moderns, it may be argued that he was a critic*.

It appears that Paul had a difference with his preſbyter Malchion, who procured a council to be ſummoned, which, according to Athanaſius, was attended by 170 or 180 biſhops, but according to Euſebius about 600, A. D. 264. At this ſynod Firmilian was preſent, but Dionyſius of Alexandria, not being able to attend, ſent a letter. In this ſynod Paul was only admoniſhed, and not condemned. But in another ſynod, or council, at which Euſebius ſays†, innumerable biſhops were preſent, but not Firmilian, or Gregory of Neocæſarea, he was excommunicated, and depoſed. The diſpute between Paul and Malchion, who had preſided in a ſchool of rhetoric at Antioch, was made public. Mal-

* Works, Vol. iii. p. 94.
† Hiſt. Lib. vii. Cap. 28. p. 358.

chion

chion alſo drew up the ſynodical letter in the name of the Fathers of this council, which is preſerved in Euſebius*. It is evidently dictated by the ſtrongeſt prejudice and malice. Had half the villanies and immoralities that Paul is there charged with been true, it cannot be ſuppoſed that ſuch men as Firmilian, Gregory, and thoſe who attended at the firſt council, would have heſitated to depoſe him.

Notwithſtanding this depoſition by a council of biſhops, Paul could not be removed from the epiſcopal houſe (which however it is evident he could not have occupied without the good will of the people, who, it muſt be obſerved, had alone a proper right to depoſe him) till the authority of the emperor Aurelian, who was the enemy of Zenobia, was called in. What became of Paul afterwards is not ſaid; but from him the unitarians were generally called *Paulians* till the council of Nice.

Paul was a writer, but we have no particular account of his works; and he not only held the doctrine of the humanity of Chriſt, but probably denied the miraculous conception; as he ſaid that "he acknowledged in "Chriſt the powerful word from heaven, by

* Hiſt. Lib. vii. Cap, 30. p. 359.

"prede-

" predetermination before all ages, but that " it was manifeſted at Nazareth," which he probably conſidered as the place of his birth*. It is alſo probable that the followers of Paul did not baptize in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt, becauſe it was decreed by the council of Nice, that if any of them joined the catholic church, they ſhould be rebaptized; which the orthodox of that age never did, if the baptiſm had been in that form, by whomſoever it had been adminiſtered.

It is acknowledged that the Fathers who condemned the errors of Paul maintained that the ſon was not *conſubſtantial* (ὁμοουσιος) or *of the ſame nature* with the Father, which is the very reverſe of what was defined to be orthodoxy at the council of Nice. But it may be accounted for in the following manner. The more philoſophical unitarians ſaid that the divinity which was in Chriſt was that of the Father, and therefore of the ſame ſubſtance with him. But it had been the cuſtom, as we have ſeen, with the firſt Trinitarians, to ſpeak of Chriſt (though they gave him the appellation of *God*) as greatly inferior to the Father;

* Athanaſius De Adventu Jeſu Chriſti, Opera, Vol. i. p. 635, 637.

and

and in expreſſing this they had not ſcrupled to ſay that he was of a different *nature* (ȣσιὰ) from the Father. This they did the more effectually to diſtinguiſh between the perſons of the Father and Son, which they commonly charged the Sabellians with confounding. But afterwards, when the Arians aroſe, and maintained that Chriſt was not only inferior to the Father, but *a creature*, made out of nothing, they who had held that the divine principle in Chriſt was the *logos*, or wiſdom of the Father, perſonified, changed their language, and adopted another, more agreeable to their principles; ſaying that Chriſt was not of a *different* nature from the Father, but of the *very ſame ſubſtance*, or *conſubſtantial* with him; as indeed he neceſſarily muſt have been, if his divinity had ever been a proper attribute of the Father.

Though Paul was depoſed, partly for his opinions, and in part for his pride, and the other vices which were laid to his charge (but which do not appear to have been proved) none of his clergy, or of the laity, are ſaid to have been excommunicated along with him; and yet as he is allowed to have been very popular in his ſee, many of them muſt, no doubt, have thought as he did, as alſo muſt

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the biſhops and preſbyters of other churches who were his admirers. It is thought by ſome that Lucian of Antioch put himſelf at the head of Paul's followers, who of their own accord formed a ſeparate ſociety; though ſome conſidered him as having entertained opinions much the ſame as thoſe of Arius.

SECTION VI.

Of the Controverſy concerning the Reign of Chriſt upon Earth.

DIONYSIUS of Alexandria, who diſtinguiſhed himſelf in every thing in which chriſtianity was concerned, held a public diſputation within this period with ſome who maintained that the reign of Chriſt would be upon earth, and who were likewiſe charged with ſaying that under him chriſtians would enjoy carnal delights. Nepos, a biſhop in Egypt, had written a book in defence of this opinion, and it was anſwered by Dionyſius, who, with a candour that does him the greateſt honour, ſpeaks in the higheſt terms

 of

of the genius and piety of Nepos, who was then dead, eſpecially on account of the many hymns which he had compoſed, and which were very much valued by chriſtians. Many whole churches of Egypt adopted the opinion of Nepos, and with them it was that Dionyſius held this public diſputation, or rather friendly conference, which continued three whole days from morning till evening. Dionyſius, in his account of this conference, greatly praiſes the candour of theſe *Millenarians*, as they were uſually called, and ſays that at the opening of the conference both he and they expreſſed the greateſt readineſs to relinquiſh their opinions, if after the diſcuſſion of them they ſhould appear not to be well founded. The iſſue was that Coracio, who was then at the head of theſe people, profeſſed himſelf convinced of his error, and openly declared that he would teach it no more; ſo that this conference ended, as very few have done, to the ſatisfaction of both parties*.

That the reign of Chriſt, whatever be its nature, will be on this earth, ſeems to be evident, from what was ſaid by the angels at the time of his aſcenſion, viz. that he

* Euſeb. Hiſt. Lib. vii. Cap. 24. p. 349.

would

would return from heaven in the ſame manner as they then ſaw him go up thither. And as we are not informed that any change will be made in our future bodies beſides what relates to the difference of ſex, it does not appear but that they are to be ſupported by food. Our Saviour himſelf ſeems to have thought ſo, when, in taking leave of his diſciples, he told them that he ſhould no more taſte the fruit of the vine, till he ſhould drink it new with them in the kingdom of heaven. The opinion of Nepos is well known to have been held by Papias, and he always maintained that he had it from the apoſtles.

As to the ſenſual delights which it is ſaid theſe Millenarians contended for, the charge was probably a calumny. Neither Papias, nor this Nepos, were perſons who are ſaid to be at all addicted to them; being men of great purity of manners, as well as piety. And it may eaſily be ſuppoſed that the idea which took place very early, and extended itſelf very faſt, of the natural impurity of every thing *corporeal*, led the generality of chriſtians to put a ſpiritual ſenſe upon every expreſſion by which the happineſs of a future ſtate is denoted. According to ſome, our pleaſures are to be ſo much of an intellectual

nature, that it cannot be conceived how our corporeal ſenſes, even thoſe of ſeeing and hearing, ſhould be of any uſe to us.

SECTION VII.

Of the Writers within this Period.

THE writers within this period, conſidering the length of it, and the proportion of peace that was in it, are not many, and of their works ſeveral were ſuggeſted by the perſecution, and the conſequences of it. Several of them were of the Alexandrian ſchool, from which the literature and the platonizing theology of chriſtians was for ſeveral ages derived.

The principal of them is Cyprian, of whoſe conduct and martyrdom an account has already been given. He wrote many *letters* relating to the occurrences of his times, eſpecially on the ſubject of martyrdom, the baptiſm of heretics, the reception of the lapſed, &c. and ſome ſhort treatiſes, viz. on the vanity of idols; againſt the heathen religion; *teſtimonies*, conſiſting of a collection of texts of ſcripture on different ſub-

jects, chiefly from the Old Teſtament; on diſcipline; on the conduct and apparel of virgins; on mercy and alms giving; on patience; on envy; concerning thoſe who had apoſtatized; and of the unity of the church, written on occaſion of the ſchiſm of Novatus, and the faction of Feliciſſimus, who granted the peace of the church too readily to thoſe who had fallen. Laſtly, his treatiſe addreſſed to Demetrianus is an anſwer to thoſe who accuſed the chriſtians of being the cauſe of all the calamities of the ſtate. Cyprian had been a teacher of rhetoric before he was a chriſtian; and it is obſerved that he is one of the firſt of the chriſtian writers who have been admired for their eloquence.

Pontius, a deacon of Cyprian's, wrote an account of his life and death*.

Cotemporary with Cyprian, was Commodianus, another Latin author, of whom an account is given by Gennadius, who wrote near the end of the fifth century. His treatiſe *againſt the Pagans*, or more properly *inſtructions* to perſons of every deſcription, in a looſe kind of verſe, is ſtill extant.

Novatus, the author of the ſchiſm that has been mentioned, compoſed the firſt treatiſe

* Jerom, Cap 79.

that was expreſſly written on the ſubject of the trinity, in which he explains with great clearneſs the generally received doctrine concerning the perſon of Chriſt before the council of Nice; maintaining that he was the logos, or reaſon of the Father, but nevertheleſs greatly inferior to him. He is alſo ſuppoſed to be the author of a treatiſe of Jewiſh meats, of another on Eaſter, and of circumciſion, as well as of ſome letters, eſpecially one from the clergy of Rome to Cyprian. Both Novatus and Cyprian wrote in Latin.

Cornelius biſhop of Rome, wrote ſeveral epiſtles, chiefly on the ſubject of his difference with Novatus, but none of them are now extant*.

Gregory, biſhop of Neocæſarea, the diſciple of Origen, compoſed a diſcourſe in his praiſe, a paraphraſe on Eccleſiaſtes, and a canonical epiſtle directed to a biſhop about the penance to be exacted of thoſe who returned to the church, after having been guilty of various crimes, during the incurſion of the barbarians into Aſia, in the reign of Gallienus. There are other works falſely attributed to him.

Dionyſius of Alexandria was the moſt diſtinguiſhed writer, as well as actor, of the age

* Jerom, Cap. 77.

in

in which he lived. He alſo had been the diſciple of Origen. Some of his works have been mentioned in the courſe of this hiſtory; but nothing of his is now extant, except ſome fragments preſerved in Euſebius. He wrote what were called *paſchal letters*, relating to the time of celebrating Eaſter, ſhewing that it ought to be before the vernal equinox; and he publiſhed a canon, or cycle, of eight years, for the direction of chriſtians with reſpect to it*. Euſebius alſo quotes a ſecond book of his concerning promiſes, meaning probably the rewards of virtue in a future ſtate againſt the Millenarians †.

Dionyſius ſpeaks of his having had two revelations, one directing him to withdraw from the perſecution in the time of Decius ‡, and the other to encourage him to read the works of heretics, by which he evidently meant thoſe of the Gnoſtics, as he ſpeaks of their traditions (παραδοσεις) and of defiling his mind with their execrable opinions (παμμιαροις αυτων ενθυμησισιν §) But as he mentions no circum-

* Euſeb. Hiſt. Lib. vii. Cap. 20. p. 344.
† Ibid. Lib. iii. Cap. 28. p. 122.
‡ Ibid. Lib. vi. Cap. 40. p. 302.
§ Ibid. Lib. vii. Cap. 7. p. 326.

ſtances of thoſe revelations, the latter of which he calls a viſion, it is impoſſible for us to determine whether they were real or not. With reſpect to the former, he ſolemnly declares that he told no untruth, and therefore there can be no doubt but that, if this excellent man was impoſed upon by his own imagination, he was far from intending to impoſe upon others. As God has vouchſafed revelations of a ſimilar nature to other perſons, he, no doubt, *may* have done it in his caſe; but the facts are deſtitute of ſufficient evidence.

In this period Anatolius of Alexandria, but biſhop of Laodicea, diſtinguiſhed himſelf by his genius and his writings, excelling in his knowledge of arithmetic, geometry, aſtronomy, logic, philoſophy, and rhetoric. He wrote a treatiſe concerning Eaſter, a part of which treatiſe is extant in Latin. Euſebius gives a large account of this Anatolius, of the great eſteem in which he was held at Alexandria, and eſpecially of his ſervices at the time of a ſiege*.

Theognoſtus of Alexandria, quoted by Athanaſius and others, but not mentioned by Euſebius, appears to have been a conſiderable

* Euſeb. Hiſt. Lib. vi. Cap. 32. p. 366.

writer,

writer, and author of a treatiſe, entitled, *Inſtitutions*, which was not altogether approved by thoſe who claimed the title of orthodox in a later period, as he called the *Son* a *creature*.

Pierius, a preſbyter of Alexandria, wrote with ſo much elegance, that Jerom ſays he was called *the younger Origen*. He wrote a commentary on Hoſea, and a treatiſe on Eaſter, neither of them now extant. Euſebius ſpeaks highly of him, as eminent for ſublime philoſophy*.

* Hiſt. Lib. vii. Cap. 32. p. 373.

PERIOD

PERIOD VI.

OF THE PERSECUTION UNDER DIOCLETIAN, A.D. 302, AND TO THE SETTLEMENT OF THE EMPIRE UNDER CONSTANTINE, A.D. 313.

THIS is the ſhorteſt period into which I have hitherto divided this hiſtory, but it is by far the moſt crowded with events, and thoſe of the greateſt conſequence, and it terminated in the complete eſtabliſhment of a ſtate of things, the like of which had never been known before; in one reſpect highly favourable to chriſtianity, I mean in the general acknowledgment of its truth, but highly unfavourable with regard to its effects on the hearts and lives of men. This period alſo terminated in the union of chriſtianity with a power the moſt heterogeneous to its nature, by which it became the reverſe of what it had been hitherto, viz. *a kingdom of this world*, arming itſelf with its powers and terrors, and by degrees exerciſing that temporal power with

with as much cruelty againſt a purer ſpecies of chriſtianity, as it had ever been employed againſt chriſtianity itſelf.

Previous to this laſt ſtruggle between chriſtianity and heatheniſm, the chriſtian church had, with little interruption, enjoyed more than half a century of reſt and peace, in which it had enlarged its boundaries, and acquired a degree of external ſplendour unknown in any former period *. Several of the emperors had been well diſpoſed towards it, and though they did not embrace chriſtianity themſelves, they had made no ſcruple of employing chriſtians in the moſt important departments of government, both civil and military; and had excuſed them from the performance of any acts which had formerly been indiſpenſible in the execution of their offices, if they objected to them as inconſiſtent with their profeſſion of chriſtianity.

* Arnobius ſpeaks of the knowledge of chriſtianity having reached the Seres, or Chineſe, as well as the Perſians and the Medes. Lib. ii. p. 30. Mr. D. Guignes has endeavoured to prove that one of the Chineſe emperors, having heard of it by the people of India trading to China, ſent perſons into the Weſt to collect a more authentic account of it, A. D. 65, but that not making ſufficient diſtinction, they brought back the religion of Fo, which had its origin about that time. Hiſtoire des Huns. Vol. i. p. 30. But I do not lay much ſtreſs on this account.

Several

Several of the emperors had indulged their chriſtian officers and their families with the moſt public exerciſe of their religion, and among theſe Euſebius particularly mentions Dorotheus and Gorgonius, who, with many others, were advanced to the higheſt magiſtracies, and the government of provinces. Many heathen governors alſo ſhewed great reſpect to chriſtian biſhops, and permitted them to erect new and more ſpacious edifices for their public aſſemblies, as the demand for them kept increaſing, and the rites of the heathen religion became more neglected and diſuſed. We may therefore conclude, that at this time a very great proportion of the people, in all the provinces of the empire, and eſpecially in the Eaſt, made open profeſſion of chriſtianity.

But this ſtate of proſperity had produced, as before, many bad, as well as many good effects. The chriſtian biſhops and people, having no foreign enemies, were divided among themſelves; and that affectionate love and ſympathy, which had been cheriſhed by common difficulties, had given place to jealouſy, envy, and hatred; which, as Euſebius expreſſes it, led them to fight with words,

as

as with ſwords and ſpears*. Alſo, a ſpirit of indifference with reſpect to religion in general, and an attachment to the world and the things of it, the fruitful parent of all vices, infected chriſtians as well as other perſons, when perſecution had ceaſed to keep up their zeal, and to compel them, as it were, to look from earth to heaven.

At length, however, it pleaſed Divine Providence to rouſe the chriſtian church from this ſtate of indifference and worldly mindedneſs, by the moſt ſevere, and the longeſt continued perſecution to which it had ever been expoſed. And by this it appeared that, notwithſtanding the diſeaſes which it had contracted in a ſtate of indolence, its *ſtamina* were good; for it not only ſurvived, but was improved by the trial. The return of perſecution revived the ancient ſpirit and zeal of chriſtians, and no more account was made by them of torture and death, than on any former ſimilar occaſion.

This perſecution is uſually aſcribed to Diocletian, but it was more properly a meaſure of Galerius Maximian, his ſon-in-law, and one of the Cæſars; and it is ſaid that, for ſome time, Diocletian remonſtrated againſt the propoſal,

* Euſeb. Hiſt. Lib. viii. Cap. 1. p. 335.

poſal, on account of the miſeries that he foreſaw it would produce. For though he was ſuperſtitious, and a friend to the ancient religion (which was ſuppoſed to be connected with the welfare and glory of the empire, which he had much at heart) he was not naturally cruel. Moreover, the perſecution did not begin; at leaſt, it was not carried on with any violence, till the nineteenth year of his reign, a few years before he reſigned the government intirely, and it continued ſeven years, after he had nothing to do with the adminiſtration, and when, it does not appear, that he intereſted himſelf at all in it.

It appears, however, that Diocletian, in conjunction with his colleague, Maximian Herculius, had ſhewn himſelf unfavourable to the chriſtians, on ſome occaſions, before the breaking out of the great perſecution which bears his name*. It is ſaid, that at the meeting of the two emperors at Milan, which was the year before the adoption of the two Cæſars, and the ſixth of the reign of Diocletian, they concerted ſome meaſures that were hoſtile to chriſtianity †; and when ten years of the joint reigns of Diocletian and Maximian

* Epiphanius, H. 66. Opera, Vol. i. p.
† De Mortibus Perſecutorum, Cap. 8. p.

were

were expired, ſolemn games, in honour of the heathen gods, were celebrated, with ſacrifices, through all the provinces, by Diocletian at Nicomedia, and by Maximian at Rome, which ſhews their attachment to their ancient rites.

SECTION I.

Of the Progreſs of the Perſecution in general.

EUSEBIUS obſerves, that the perſecution began in the army, before the publication of the edicts which made it general; the officers being obliged to reſign their commands, if they would not ſacrifice to the heathen gods. Many, however, not only reſigned their rank in the army upon this occaſion, but ſuffered death; till one of their commanders was deterred from proceeding any farther, by the prodigious numbers who offered themſelves to him, as ready to die when they were thus called upon*.

* Euſeb. Hiſt. Lib. viii. Cap. 4. p. 380.

In

In the fourteenth year of Diocletian and Maximian, they made a magnificent triumph together at Rome, for their ſignal ſucceſs in re-eſtabliſhing the affairs of the empire, and from this time Diocletian affected to be called *Jovius*, and Maximian *Herculius*, and their pride and arrogance was from this time viſibly encreaſed. But it was not till the nineteenth year of Diocletian, when the emperors were eſtabliſhed in full power, when the empire had no rebellion within itſelf, nor any war with its neighbours, that they formed the ſerious deſign of extirpating the chriſtian religion; imagining, it may be preſumed, that till this was done, the proſperity of the ſtate could not be ſaid to be ſtable, the ſafety and grandeur of the empire being ſuppoſed to depend upon the obſervance of thoſe rites, to which the Romans had been addicted when the empire was eſtabliſhed.

It was this idea that miſled Trajan, Marcus Antoninus, and other emperors, before Diocletian; and their failure of ſucceſs in exterminating chriſtianity did not deter theſe two from making the attempt; imagining, no doubt, that notwithſtanding the great increaſe of chriſtians, they were poſſeſſed of advantages ſufficient to counterbalance that circumſtance;

and

and ſeeing that if the evil, as they thought it, was ſuffered to proceed much farther, it would be too late to attempt the ſuppreſſion of it. It is alſo ſaid, in Euſebius's life of Conſtantine*, that Apollo was reported to have complained out of a cavern, that his oracles were ſilent, or uncertain, on account of ſome *juſt men;* and that on this account the emperor (ſuppoſing that by *juſt men* muſt be underſtood *the chriſtians*) was incited to begin the perſecution.

By the firſt edict, which was publiſhed juſt before Eaſter, A. D. 303, at Nicomedia, where Diocletian and Galerius then were, it was ordered, that all chriſtian churches ſhould be demoliſhed to their foundations, that the ſacred books of the chriſtians ſhould be burned, that thoſe chriſtians who enjoyed any honours ſhould be deprived of them, and that private perſons ſhould be reduced to ſervitude, if they did not renounce chriſtianity†. No ſooner was this edict ſet up, than a perſon of conſiderable rank, and intemperate zeal, pulled it down, and tore it. Being immediately ſeized, and put to death by torture, he ex-

* Euſeb. Hiſt. Lib. ii. Cap. 50, 51. p. 561.
† Ibid. Lib. viii. Cap. 2. p. 379.

preſſed the greateſt compoſure and joy to his laſt breath*.

Not long after appeared another edict, by which all the biſhops, and the other clergy, were ordered to be committed to priſon, and compelled to ſacrifice to the heathen gods†; and this was followed by a third, in which it was ordered, that they who refuſed to ſacrifice, ſhould be expoſed to torture‡.

With reſpect to the particulars of this famous perſecution, I ſhall ſtrictly follow Euſebius, who declares, that he relates what paſſed under his own eyes. He himſelf, he ſays, was preſent when the churches were demoliſhed, and the books of ſcripture committed to the flames. In this perſecution ſome of the clergy concealed themſelves, others were apprehended, and expoſed to various inſults, many had not fortitude to bear the trial, and many had recourſe, as in the preceding perſecution, to various artifices, in order to be thought to have ſacrificed when they really had not||.

* Euſeb. Hiſt. Lib. viii. Cap. 5. p. 381.
† Ibid. Cap. 3. p. 379.
‡ Ibid. p. 383.
|| Ibid. Cap. 3. 7. 379.

When

When Euſebius proceeds to mention particular caſes, he begins with thoſe who ſuffered in the emperor's houſhold, and ſays, that Dorotheus, and other youths of the bedchamber, who had been particularly favoured and eſteemed by the emperors, preferred every ſpecies of torture to the honours with which they had been inveſted. To enable us to judge of what was endured by the reſt, he ſays that one of them, whoſe name was Peter, being brought before the emperors, and refuſing to ſacrifice, was firſt ſtripped naked, and then cruelly ſcourged till his bones were laid bare. This having no effect, he was waſhed with vinegar and ſalt, and afterwards gradually roaſted on a gridiron, perſiſting in his profeſſion of chriſtianity to the laſt. Dorotheus and Gorgonius, with many others who belonged to the palace, after enduring various tortures, were ſtrangled; and Anthimius, the biſhop of Nicomedia, was beheaded.

After this the palace being on fire, and the chriſtians being ſaid to be the incendiaries, all the chriſtians in the place were, by the order of the emperors, killed in crowds, together with their families; ſome by the ſword, and others by fire; and upon this occaſion many perſons of both ſexes voluntarily ruſhed into

the flames. Many were thrown bound into the ſea, and ſome who had been interred were taken out of their graves, and thrown into the ſea alſo.

This paſſed at Nicomedia, at the beginning of the perſecution; and when the ſame orders were carried into Armenia, and Syria, an incredible number of perſons were thrown into priſon, ſo that thoſe places which uſed to be occupied by murderers, and villains of every ſpecies, were now filled with biſhops and clergy; and there was no room left for thoſe who were condemned for crimes. It is impoſſible, he ſays, to compute the numbers of martyrs in each province, eſpecially in Africa proper, and Mauritania, Thebais, and Egypt; and many perſons flying from Egypt, were put to death in other provinces *.

Some of theſe, Euſebius ſays, he himſelf ſaw expoſed to various kinds of torture, and ſome thrown to wild beaſts, at Tyre. On this occaſion many of the beaſts, he ſays, would not hurt them, but turned upon thoſe who incited them. He particularly mentions a young man, not twenty years of age, who ſtood without moving from his place, and holding his hands in the form of a croſs, when a wild

* Euſeb. Hiſt. Lib. viii. Cap. 6. p. 381.

I beaſt

beaſt ruſhing towards him, ſuddenly retired. A bull being let looſe upon five perſons, did not hurt any of them, but threw ſeveral of their enemies into the air, and tore them. After this, other beaſts were let looſe upon them; but this not ſucceeding, they were put to death by the ſword, and then thrown into the ſea*. Theſe were all perſons who had fled from Egypt.

In Egypt itſelf, Euſebius ſays, there were men innumerable, with their wives and children, put to death; and that after being made to endure cruel ſcourgings, and all kinds of torture, dreadful to hear of, they were either thrown into the fire, or drowned. Some cheerfully preſented their heads to be ſtruck off, ſome expired under the torture, and ſome were famiſhed to death. Others were crucified, ſome in the manner that is moſt uſual with malefactors, but others in a more cruel way, with their heads downwards, in which poſture they were ſuffered to live till they died of hunger †.

But the tortures exerciſed on the chriſtians of Thebais exceeded all the reſt. Some had their fleſh torn with ſharp ſhells till they died;

* Euſeb. Hiſt. Lib. viii. Cap. 7. p. 384.
† Ibid. Cap. 8. p. 385.

 women,

women, half naked, were tied by one foot, with their heads downwards, and ſuſpended on high machines. Others were put to death by having their limbs torn aſunder by branches of trees, to which they had been faſtened, while they were bent with great violence, and then ſuffered to reſume their natural poſition. Theſe tortures were continued not a few days only, or a ſhort ſpace of time, but year after year; and thirty, ſixty, or a hundred, men, women, and children, were ſometimes put to death in different ways on one day. Euſebius himſelf ſaw many heaps of thoſe who had been killed in a ſingle day, ſome beheaded, and others burned. On this occaſion the ſwords of the executioners were blunted or broken, and ſome being weary, they were ſucceeded by others.

Notwithſtanding theſe cruelties, ſo great was the ardour of the chriſtians, that no ſooner were ſome diſpatched from the tribunals, than others preſented themſelves, profeſſing themſelves to be chriſtians, as Euſebius himſelf was witneſs; rejoicing when they heard their ſentence pronounced, and ſinging pſalms and hymns to their laſt breath. Some of theſe were rich and noble, and others diſtinguiſhed for their eloquence and their know-

ledge

ledge of philoſophy. Of this claſs was Philoromus, who was a chief magiſtrate in Alexandria, and had ſat as a judge himſelf, ſurrounded by guards. Such alſo was Phileas, biſhop of Thmuis, a man eminent for philoſophy. Theſe two were ſurrounded by numerous relations and friends, who joined with the judge himſelf, in entreating them to have compaſſion on themſelves, their wives, and children; but it was without effect, and with the greateſt compoſure they ſubmitted to have their heads ſtruck off*.

From an epiſtle of this Phileas to a perſon in Thmuis, Euſebius gives an account of the tortures inflicted upon the chriſtians in Alexandria. In this place ſome were killed with clubs, and others in different methods of ſcourging. Some, with their hands tied behind them, were ſuſpended on large ſtakes, and then had all their limbs violently ſtretched by machines. To ſome the executioners applied the inſtruments of torture, not to their ſides only, which had been uſual in the caſe of murderers, but to all parts of their bodies, their bellies, legs, knees, &c. Some were ſuſpended by one hand to the porticos, and others on poſts, with their faces towards each

* Euſeb. Hiſt. Lib. viii. Cap. 9. p. 385.

other, and their feet not touching the ground; and in this poſture they were ſuffered to continue, not only while the judge was ſpeaking to them, but almoſt the whole day. For while he went to attend others, his miniſters remained with the firſt, to releaſe any who, being overcome by the violence of their ſufferings, ſhould retract their confeſſion.

Some were ſo tortured in the ſtocks, that they were afterwards unable to ſtand at all; and many exhibited a more frightful ſpectacle with their bruiſes, ſcars, and diſtortions, when they were recovered, than they had done during the torture itſelf. Some expired under the torture, and others in priſon afterwards. Some, who with great difficulty had been cured of their wounds and diſlocations, being required to chuſe again, whether they would ſacrifice or die, with the greateſt cheerfulneſs choſe the latter; mindful, as the writer ſays, of the command not to worſhip any God but one. Such is the account of Phileas, written not with a view to diſcourage thoſe to whom he wrote, but to teach them, by theſe heroic examples, to make light of any ſufferings in ſo glorious a cauſe*.

* Euſeb. Hiſt. Lib. viii. Cap. 10. p. 388.

We

We have a particular account* of two martyrdoms in Africa in this perſecution, one of Maximilian, a young man of Teveſte, and the other of Felix, biſhop of Tubyſa, in Numidia. The former, being choſen to ſerve in the army, refuſed; ſaying that he was a chriſtian, and that, as ſuch, it was not lawful for him to do it. Being told that there were many chriſtians who ſerved in the armies of Maximian, Conſtantius, and Maximus, he ſaid that others might do as they thought proper, but that he could not do what he thought to be wrong. Being then ſentenced to be beheaded for refuſing the military oath, he ſaid *Thanks be to God*, which ſeems to have been the anſwer which the chriſtians generally returned when they received their ſentence.

At the place of execution he exhorted his brother to act as he had done, and deſired his father to give the new ſuit of cloaths (which had been prepared for him with a view to his going into the army) to the perſon who was to perform the office of his executioner. Pomponia a chriſtian matron conveyed the body

* This account is taken from an ancient MS. and is ſubjoined to the Oxford edition of the tract aſcribed to Lactantius, *De Mortibus Perſecutorum.* 1680.

to

to Carthage, depoſited it near that of Cyprian, and dying herſelf thirteen days after, ſhe was buried with them. The father of Maximilian alſo gave God thanks for the honour that his ſon had received, and followed him not long after.

In the eighth conſulſhip of Diocletian, and the ſeventh of Maximian, an order being iſſued to burn the ſacred books of the chriſtians, and publiſhed at Tubyza in Numidia, Magnilianus the governor of the city ordered firſt ſome preſbyters, and then Felix the biſhop of the place to be brought before him; and having recited the imperial edict, he required him to give up the books which belonged to his church that they might be burned. But on his declaring that he would rather give his own body to be burned, he was ſent to Carthage to the lieutenant of Anulinus the proconſul, and giving the ſame anſwer there, he was put into the loweſt priſon, and after being confined there ſixteen days, he was brought before Anulinus himſelf, who ſent him to Rome; and thence the prefect of the city ſent him, loaded with heavy irons, to the emperor at Nola. Being then brought before the proper judge, and perſiſting in his refuſal to give up the ſacred

cred books, he was ſentenced to be beheaded. For this he returned God thanks, as was uſual; and after being allowed to pray, the ſentence was executed on the eighteenth of the calends of February, and his remains were carried by his fellow chriſtians to Carthage. He was 56 years of age.

In Phrygia there was a town, which, becauſe it conſiſted wholly of chriſtians, the magiſtrates themſelves as well as the other inhabitants (for they had with one voice refuſed to ſacrifice) was ſurrounded with ſoldiers, who ſet fire to it, and burned it, together with all its inhabitants, men, women, and children. In this province Adauctus, who had been advanced through all the dignities of the ſtate till he was made procurator, and then held the office of treaſurer, ſuffered martyrdom*.

Here our hiſtorian ſays it would be impoſſible to recite all the ſufferings of the chriſtian martyrs, or to deſcribe the various tortures to which they were expoſed. In ſome places they were generally beheaded, as in Arabia; in ſome they were left to die with their limbs broken, as in Cappadocia; in ſome they were ſuſpended by the feet, with their heads

* Euſeb. Hiſt. Lib. viii. Cap. 11. p. 390.

down-

downwards, and in this ſituation a fire was made under them till they were ſuffocated with the ſmoke, as was done in Meſopotamia; in ſome places their noſes, ears, hands, and other limbs, were cut off, as at Alexandria; in other places they were roaſted, but not ſuffered to die, on a gridiron. Others choſe to put their right hands into the fire rather than ſacrifice, and ſome being purſued threw themſelves headlong from high buildings, rather than fall into the hands of their enemies.

One woman of rank and fortune at Antioch being apprehended, with two beautiful daughters, who dreaded violation more than any thing elſe they could ſuffer, having got leave from the ſoldiers, to whoſe cuſtody they had been committed, to withdraw a little, threw themſelves into the river, and were drowned. Two other women of the ſame place, ſiſters, diſtinguiſhed by their birth, fortune, and every accompliſhment, were thrown into the ſea*.

The ſufferings of the martyrs in Pontus, Euſebius ſays, were particularly frightful. In this province ſome had reeds thruſt under the nails of all their fingers, ſome had melted

* Euſeb. Hiſt. Lib. viii. Cap. 12. p. 391.

lead

lead poured upon them, and others were tortured in the moſt horrible manner in their private parts, and their bowels; their judges as it were contending with each other, who ſhould excel the reſt in the invention of tortures. At length, being tired with theſe cruelties, they deſiſted of themſelves from inflicting capital puniſhments, as if by a ſpecial favour of the emperors, and contented themſelves with putting out the eyes of ſome, and laming others, which was the gentleſt of their puniſhments. But it was impoſſible to give the number of thoſe whoſe right eyes were firſt put out, and then had cauteries applied to them, and who were afterwards ſent to the mines in the province. Theſe ſufferings, the hiſtorian ſays, were borne with ſuch fortitude, as filled the whole world with the higheſt admiration.

In a ſeparate chapter Euſebius recites the ſufferings of the biſhops, and ſome of the ſuperior clergy. Anthimius biſhop of Nicomedia, as mentioned before, was beheaded. Of the Antiochians was Lucian a preſbyter, a man of exemplary piety, who delivered an apology to the emperors at Nicomedia, and ſuffered there. In Phœnicia, Tyrannio biſhop of

of Tyre, and Zenobius biſhop of Sidon, were martyrs; as alſo Sylvanus biſhop of Emeſa, who was thrown to the wild beaſts, together with ſome other perſons of the ſame place. The two others ſuffered at Antioch, Tyrannio being thrown into the ſea, and Zenobius (who was an excellent phyſician) dying under torture with iron hooks.

Among the clergy of Paleſtine who were martyrs, was Sylvanus, biſhop of Gaza, who, with thirty-nine other perſons was beheaded in the mines of Phænus. In the ſame place the Egyptian biſhops Peleus and Nilus, with ſome other perſons, were burned. But none appeared to our author to deſerve a higher commendation than Pamphilus, a preſbyter of Cæſarea, of whoſe ſufferings an account will be given in another place.

Of the martyrs among the clergy in Egypt, was Peter biſhop of Alexandria, with the preſbyters Dius and Ammonius, and likewiſe Phileas, Heſychius, Pachumius, and Theodorus, all biſhops of different cities. There were alſo, he ſays, ſix hundred others by no means obſcure perſons, belonging to different churches in Egypt, the particulars of whoſe ſufferings he leaves to be related by thoſe

thoſe who were eye-witneſſes of them; he himſelf propoſing to give a like particular account of thoſe martyrs of whoſe ſufferings he himſelf was a witneſs, in a ſeparate work, viz. of the martyrs of Paleſtine*.

This was the firſt perſecution, in which, by the orders of government, an attempt was firſt made to deſtroy the ſacred books of the chriſtians. And Moſheim, with great probability, conjectures that Hierocles, or ſome other learned heathen, ſuggeſted this meaſure; and he ſuppoſes that many valuable treatiſes may have been loſt in conſequence of it. This may have been the caſe with reſpect to ſome books of which there were few copies, or to the original copies of the books of the New Teſtament; but there were at this time too many copies of the ſcriptures (the books which the chriſtians valued moſt) for ſuch an order to have any effect. On the contrary, the natural conſequence of ſuch a meaſure would be, that books of value would be concealed with greater care, and more copies would be taken of them than ever.

* Euſeb. Hiſt. Lib. viii. Cap. 13. p. 393.

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SECTION II.

Of the Conduct of the Heathen Philoſophers, and of the firſt Stop that was put to the Perſecution.

IT is remarkable that we have no example of any heathen philoſopher pleading in favour of toleration, or expreſſing any compaſſion for the ſufferings of chriſtians, in this perſecution, or any of the preceding ones. On the contrary, like Marcus Antoninus, who holds a high rank among philoſophers, as well as of emperors, they bore the moſt implacable hatred to the chriſtians, and rejoiced in every event that was unfavourable to them. For notwithſtanding many of the learned chriſtians retained, or adopted, the principles of Plato, or thoſe of ſome other philoſophers (ſome ſpecies of philoſophy being the moſt important article of liberal education in thoſe days, and without ſome knowledge of which no perſon was conſidered as having any pretenſions to ſcholarſhip) and though by incorporating platoniſm with chriſtianity many of the learned, who gave ſome

ſome attention to the hiſtorical evidences of chriſtianity, were no doubt brought to think better of it, and even to embrace it; yet the conduct of all chriſtian teachers was ſo much the reverſe of that of mere philoſophers, that they could not but remain hoſtile to each other.

The chriſtians not only inculcated doctrines of infinitely more importance than any of the philoſophers pretended to, and with an evidence that was level to the plaineſt capacities, but they took pains to teach the unlearned among the common people, whom the philoſophers held in great contempt, as unworthy of their inſtructions. According to the principles of chriſtianity, all mankind, without any diſtinction of high or low, rich or poor, are equally candidates for a happy immortality; and in this great reſpect, compared to which all other diſtinctions are of no moment whatever, the meaneſt ſlaves are equal to their maſters. Before ſuch a ſyſtem as this the boaſted ſuperiority of philoſophers to peaſants or mechanics abſolutely vaniſhed. They therefore felt their pride mortified, and ſaw themſelves, and the ſcience they pretended to, eclipſed by the illiterate among the common people, whom they had ſo much deſpiſed. In this ſtate of mind they conſoled themſelves with affecting to deſpiſe thoſe

who deſpiſed them; and without demeaning themſelves to examine the hiſtorical evidence of the facts on which chriſtianity is founded, they ſuperciliouſly contented themſelves with conſidering it as a *new thing*, brought into the world by obſcure perſons, with a crucified malefactor, and ſome fiſhermen, at its head; and with ſaying that it was impoſſible that ſuch people as theſe ſhould teach the world any thing new, or important.

Beſides, the heathen philoſophers, how much ſoever ſome of them might deſpiſe the ſuperſtitious rites of their country, univerſally conformed to them, and promoted the obſervance of them in others; and many of them were, no doubt, ſeriouſly perſuaded that things of ſuch venerable antiquity were of a ſacred nature, and in ſome unknown manner connected with the well being of ſtates. Being ignorant of true ſcience, and the real laws of nature, philoſophers themſelves, as they were called, were as ſuperſtitious as the loweſt of the vulgar, believing in omens, and the power of charms and magic. Of this every age, even ſo late as that of Julian, in which more good ſenſe might have been expected, furniſhes abundant proof. On this account the philoſophy of Marcus Antoninus, and of Julian did not emancipate their minds

from the moſt abſurd ſuperſtitions, or diſpoſe them to humanity with reſpect to men who entertained opinions different from theirs, though they were guilty of no offences againſt ſociety, or the ſtate; and they were only the more provoked to find them to be ſuch men as a regard to God and conſcience rendered ſuperior to their threats.

The firſt ſtop that was put to this cruel perſecution was the effect of a ſuperſtition, ſimilar to that which had occaſioned it. Galerius Maximian, by whoſe inſtigation the meaſure had been adopted, being ſeized with a dreadful ulcer in his anus, which affected all the neighbouring parts, and almoſt his whole body (ſo that it bred worms, and the ſtench of it was ſo offenſive as to be inſupportable to his neareſt domeſtics) having found the aid of his phyſicians, and alſo his prayers and his ſacrifices to the heathen gods, unavailable, at length publiſhed a reſcript in favour of the chriſtians, A. D. 311.

In this reſcript we ſee the true principle of the perſecutions, viz. that it was intended to reſtore the ancient rites, in order to eſtabliſh the proſperity of the ſtate. We likewiſe ſee in it a confeſſion of an inability to ſucceed in that meaſure, notwithſtanding all the vio-

lence with which it had been carried on, and that though ſome had been induced to abandon chriſtianity, they did not therefore become worſhippers of the heathen gods, but threw aſide all regard to religion. On theſe accounts the emperor abandoned the meaſure, and he endeavoured to do it in ſuch a manner as to gain ſome credit for his clemency. Withal he entertained ſome hope that when all other help failed, he might be relieved by the God of the chriſtians, whom he deſired to intercede for him. As this reſcript is moſt curious and important, I ſhall give the whole of it nearly in the tranſlation of Dr. Lardner.

"The emperor Cæſar Galerius Valerius "Maximian, invincible, auguſt, high-prieſt, "to the people. Among other things which "we have ordered, with a view to the benefit "and proſperity of the public, we did in-"deed formerly ſtrive to correct all things "according to the ancient laws, and eſta-"bliſhed conſtitution of the Romans; and "among other things that the chriſtians who "had forſaken the religion of their an-"ceſtors, ſhall return to a right mind: for-"aſmuch as by ſome means ſuch an obſti-"nacy had ſeized them, and ſuch was their "folly, that they followed not the inſtitu-"tions

" tions of the ancients, which poſſibly ſome " of their own anceſtors had appointed, but " according to their own fancy, and juſt as " they pleaſed, they made laws for them- " ſelves, to be obſerved and followed by " them, and in many places they drew over " multitudes of people to follow their cuſ- " toms. Wherefore, when after we had pub- " liſhed our edict that they ſhould return to " the inſtitutions of the ancients, many have " been expoſed to danger, and many have " been greatly afflicted, and have undergone " various kinds of deaths; and foraſmuch as " great multitudes perſiſt in their opinions, " and we have perceived that they give not " due worſhip and reverence to the immortal " gods, nor yet worſhip the God of the chriſ- " tians; We, duly conſidering our accuſ- " tomed mildneſs and humanity, with which " we are wont to diſpence pardon to all men, " have thought proper readily to hold forth " to them our indulgence, that they may at " length be chriſtians, and that they may re- " build the houſes in which they have been " uſed to aſſemble, provided they do nothing " contrary to good government. By another " letter we ſhall make known our pleaſure to " the judges, for the direction of their con-

"duct: Wherefore, agreeably to this our "indulgence, they ought to pray to their "God for our welfare, and for that of the "public, and for their own; that on all ſides "the public may be preſerved in ſafety, and "they may live ſecurely in their own habita-"tions *."

This edict, which was publiſhed at Nicomedia on the laſt day of April, A.D. 311, did not proceed from any remorſe of conſcience, to which Euſebius aſcribes it, but, as Moſheim juſtly obſerves, it was ſuggeſted by ſuperſtition, and we may add by deſpair of gaining his object. Maximian did not long ſurvive this edict; and its beneficial effects, as Euſebius obſerves †, were not univerſal. For Maximin, who ruled in the Eaſt, not approving of it, did not publiſh it in the proper forms, but only mentioned it to ſome of the governors, as they did to others. However Sabinus, the prætorian prefect wrote to all the governors of provinces, ſignifying that, ſince it had been found impoſſible to reduce the chriſtians by any means to the obedience of the laws, they ſhould not be any more moleſted. On this the perſecution ceaſed, the

* Heathen Teſtimonies, Vol. iii. p. 296.
† Euſeb. Hiſt. Lib. ix. Cap. 1. p. 439.

chriſ-

chriſtians were reſtored to their churches, and thoſe who had been condemned to the mines were ſet at liberty *.

SECTION III.

The Renewal of the Perſecution, and the final Ceſſation of it.

THIS favourable ſtate of things did not continue more than ſix months. And as a pretence for reſuming the perſecution, Maximin, who had been created Cæſar in A. D. 306, and who governed in the Eaſt, procured formal applications to be made to him from Antioch, and other cities, requeſting that no chriſtians might be permitted to reſide in them. His chief agent in this buſineſs at Antioch, was Theotecnus, a bitter and crafty enemy of the chriſtians, who had conſecrated a ſtatue to Jupiter Philius, and who pretended that it had given out an oracle to this purpoſe †. The emperor readily

* Euſeb. Hiſt. Lib. ix. Cap. 1. p. 440.
† Ibid. Lib. ix. Cap. iii. p. 442.

complied with the prayers which he himſelf had ſuggeſted, and the heathen rites being reſtored with great zeal in all places, the perſecution of the chriſtians was reſumed *.

Euſebius then relates a ſingular contrivance of the heathens to diſcredit chriſtianity. They publiſhed fictitious *Memoirs of Pilate*, and diſtributed copies of them through all the provinces ſubject to Maximin, with orders that they ſhould be taught to children in the ſchools. Alſo ſome women of Damaſcus were prevailed upon by threats, to give evidence that the chriſtians of that city were guilty of thoſe abominable actions, which had ſo often been laid to their charge. Theſe allegations were likewiſe added to the Memoirs, and by order of the prince they were likewiſe publiſhed in all places †. Some of the perſons who had been moſt active in procuring theſe allegations afterwards laid violent hands upon themſelves.

The perſecution being thus reſumed, three perſons, who confeſſed that they were chriſtians, at Emeſa (one of them Sylvanus, who had been biſhop of the place forty years) were thrown to the wild beaſts. At the ſame

* Euſeb. Hiſt. Lib. ix. Cap. 4. p. 442.
† Ibid. Lib. ix. Cap. 5. p. 443.

time

time Peter, who had with great reputation been biſhop of Alexandria, was, by the eſpecial order of Maximin, beheaded; and in the ſame manner were other Egyptian biſhops put to death. And Lucian, a preſbyter of Antioch, mentioned before (the ſame who is ſaid to have been at the head of the unitarians there) being carried to Nicomedia, where Maximin then was, was put to death in priſon *. The reſcripts of the emperors againſt the chriſtians were alſo, by order of Maximin, engraved on braſs, and ſet up in the cities, which had never been done before; and they were read in the ſchools along with the Memoirs of Pilate abovementioned.

A copy of this emperor's reſcript, addreſſed to the people of Tyre, with reſpect to what they had decreed againſt the chriſtians, is given by Euſebius from the table of braſs on which it was engraved; and as it ſhews the true ſpirit of heatheniſm more diſtinctly than any other public monument of the kind, I ſhall give the whole of it nearly in the tranſlation of Dr. Lardner.

" Now, at length, the impudent confidence
" of men, having once ſhaken off the dark

* Euſeb. Hiſt. Lib. ix. Cap. 6. p. 444.

miſts

" miſts of error and ignorance, which for a " time blinded the minds of men, rather mi- " ſerable than wicked, may diſcern that the " world is governed by the indulgent provi- " dence of the immortal gods. It is impoſ- " ſible to ſay how grateful, how delightful, " how acceptable, your pious reſolution for " the honour of the gods has been to us. Nor " was it before unknown to any, how great " is your reſpect and veneration for the gods, " which have been manifeſted not by vain " words only, but alſo by great works; on " which account your city may be deſervedly " ſtiled the ſeat and habitation of the immor- " tal gods; and it is evident by many proofs, " that ſhe flouriſhes by the advent and pre- " ſence of the heavenly deities. And now " your city, negligent of your own particular " intereſt, and no longer ſending to me the " requeſts which you were formerly wont to " ſend, conducive to your own proſperity; " when it perceived that the promoters of " the deteſtable vanity began to creep abroad " again, and that, like fire careleſsly raked " up, it broke out with redoubled violence, " immediately, without delay, you had re- " courſe to our piety, as the metropolis of all " religion, requeſting redreſs and aſſiſtance;

" nor can it be doubted that this wholeſome " deſign has been put into your minds by the " immortal gods, for the ſake of your pious " regard for them. The moſt high and moſt " mighty Jupiter, who preſides in your fa- " mous city, who preſerves your country " gods, your wives, your children, your fa- " milies, and houſes, from deſtruction, has " ſuggeſted this petition to you. He it is " who has breathed into your minds this ſa- " lutary reſolution, evidently ſhewing how " excellent, and noble, and profitable, it is to " worſhip him, and to perform the ſacred " rites and ceremonies of the immortal gods " with due veneration. Who can be ſo void " of all ſenſe and reaſon, as not to know, that " it is owing to the propitious favour and " bounty of the gods towards us, that the " earth does not neglect to reſtore to us the " ſeeds committed to it, that the hope of the " huſbandman is not diſappointed, that the " aſpect of deſtructive war is not immove- " ably fixed on the earth, that our bodies are " not deſtroyed by the intemperance of the " air, that the ſea is not perpetually toſſed " and made to overflow with ſtormy winds, " and that the earth, the mother and nurſe " of all things, is not rent aſunder by agita-

" tions

" tions within its own bowels, and mountains " ſwallowed up by vaſt and unexpected ſciſ- " ſures? There is no man who does not " know that all theſe, and worſe calamities, " have heretofore often happened; and they " have befallen us on account of the perni- " cious error, and empty vanity, of thoſe " execrable men, which are ſo ſpread as to " cover almoſt the whole earth with ſhame " and diſhonour." After ſome other things, he adds,

" Let men now look into the open fields, " and ſee the flouriſhing corn waving its full " ears; let them ſee the meadows bedecked " with plants and flowers, that have been " watered with ſeaſonable rain; let them ob- " ſerve the calm and agreeable temperature of " the air; let all men, therefore, henceforth " rejoice, that by your piety and reſpect for " the ſacred rites of religion, the deity of the " moſt valiant and moſt potent Mars has " been appeaſed, and that they may now ſe- " curely enjoy the benefits of a profound and " delightful peace. As many as have for- " ſaken that blind error, and intricate maze " of vanity, and are returned to a right and " ſound mind, let them rejoice abundantly, " as men delivered from a dangerous tem-

" peſt,

" peſt, or a grievous diſeaſe, and who have " now before them the proſpect of a pleaſant " and comfortable life for the time to come. " But if any ſtill perſiſt in their vain and de- " teſtable folly, let them be expelled far away " from your city and country, as you have " deſired, that thus, conformable to your " laudable care in this matter, your city " being purged from all defilement and wick- " edneſs, you may, according to your own " genuine diſpoſition, with all due veneration " and ſolemnity, perform the ſacred rites of " the immortal gods. And that you may " know how grateful this your petition has " been to me, and that, without decrees and " without petitions, I am of myſelf forward " to encourage well diſpoſed minds, we per- " mit you to aſk the greateſt benefit you can " aſk, as a reward for ſo religious a purpoſe. " Take care that you aſk immediately, and " that you receive what you aſk; for you ſhall " obtain it without delay; which benefit, be- " ſtowed upon your city, ſhall be hencefor- " ward, throughout all time, a monument of " your devout piety for the immortal gods, " and ſhall declare to your children and poſ- " terity, that you have received from our " hands

"hands a recompence of your love and vir-
"tue *."

We here ſee all kinds of temporal proſperity moſt confidently aſcribed to the influence of the heathen gods, in conſequence of the obſervance of the ancient rites, and, on the other hand, every ſpecies of temporal calamity is aſcribed to the neglect of thoſe rites, in conſequence of the general ſpread of chriſtianity, which is here clearly acknowledged, and grievouſly lamented. This reſcript, Euſebius ſays, was fixed up on pillars in every province, ſo as to take from the chriſtians, as far as the power of man could go, all hope of a favourable turn to their affairs.

We have ſeen an inſcription in honour of Nero, as having extirpated chriſtianity out of Spain. Two inſcriptions have alſo been diſcovered, which aſcribe the ſame ſucceſs to Diocletian, Maximian, and Galerius, expreſſing that, "the name of the chriſtians, who "had overturned the ſtate, was extinguiſh-"ed †." How eaſy is it to flatter princes with accompliſhing what is above their power? So far was this perſecution, notwith-

* Teſtimonies, Vol. iii. p. 316.
† Ibid. Vol. ii. p. 321.

ſtanding

ſtanding its long continuance and ſeverity, from extirpating chriſtianity, that it was the means of giving it a firmer eſtabliſhment than ever it had before, and of extending the bounds of it. The conſtancy of the martyrs could not but aſtoniſh many of the heathens, and it convinced great numbers, that ſo remarkable an effect, a thing unknown to the world before, muſt have ſome ſolid cauſe. This would lead them to enquire into the nature and evidence of chriſtianity, and the conſequence of this with reſpect to great numbers was a perſuaſion of its truth. Many of the perſecuted chriſtians alſo fled into diſtant countries, and by this means carried the knowledge of chriſtianity whither it would not otherwiſe have reached ſo ſoon. However, while the emperor's ſervants were executing their orders in the provinces, and the chriſtians deſpaired of all aid, the tyrant was curbed, and the moſt unexpected relief was afforded them *.

As if it had been the deſign of providence to contradict the vain pretenſions of Maximin, with reſpect to the uninterrupted proſperity which he confidently expected from the reſtoration of the rites of the heathen wor-

* Euſeb. Hiſt. Lib. viii. Cap. 7. p. 447.

ſhip,

ſhip, there preſently followed a total failure of the uſual quantity of rain, to which ſucceeded a famine, attended, as uſual, by a dreadful peſtilence, the effects of which are particularly deſcribed by Euſebius. Maximin was alſo worſted in a war which he carried on againſt the Armenians, who were generally chriſtians, and whom he had endeavoured to bring back by force to the worſhip of the heathen gods. In the ravages of this peſtilence the chriſtians were diſtinguiſhed by their care of the ſick, and the burial of the dead, as they have been obſerved to be on a former occaſion; while the heathens ſhamefully neglected theſe duties; and this, being obſerved, operated greatly in favour of chriſtianity, as the religion which alone could inſpire ſuch humanity and courage*.

Soon after theſe events arrived the news of the defeat of Maxentius by Conſtantine and Licinius, and their reſcript in favour of the chriſtians; giving to them, and to all the ſubjects of the empire, a complete toleration with reſpect to every thing relating to religion, and reſtoring to them their places of public worſhip, and all the poſſeſſions of which they had been deprived in the courſe of the late perſecution.

* Euſeb. Hiſt. Lib. viii. Cap. 8. p. 448.

cution. Maximin, finding himſelf unable to oppoſe them, and reduced to the neceſſity of complying with their meaſures, now publiſhed a reſcript of his own, by which he exempted all chriſtians from puniſhment, but without expreſsly permitting them to rebuild their churches, or to reſume their public worſhip. The chriſtians, therefore, apprehending ſuch a change in his conduct as had taken place before, put no confidence in his promiſes, which were evidently the effect of compulſion *.

After this Maximin made war upon Licinius, and being worſted in it, he firſt of all put to death the prieſts and prophets of the heathen gods, by whoſe vain promiſes he had undertaken the war, as if they had been conjurors and traitors; and then giving glory, as Euſebius ſays, to the God of the chriſtians, he publiſhed an unexceptionable reſcript in their favour, giving them entire liberty to rebuild their churches, and reſtoring to them whatever lands, or other property, had been confiſcated. Soon after this he died of a grievous diſeaſe. But Lactantius ſays, that he was ſeized with this diſeaſe before the

* Euſeb. Hiſt. Lib. viii. Cap. 9. p. 455.

publication of this laſt edict, and that he implored the forgiveneſs of the chriſtians, praying for relief from his diſtemper *.

Maximin being dead, A. D. 314, he was declared to be a public enemy, in conſequence of which his ſtatues were every where thrown down, and thoſe who had taken his part, and who had been his chief inſtruments in the perſecution of the chriſtians, were put to death. Among theſe was Picentius, for whom he had had a particular friendſhip, and Caledonus, who had diſtinguiſhed himſelf by the unbounded ſlaughter of the chriſtians in Egypt. Theotecnus alſo was put to death, after being firſt tortured, together with thoſe prieſts and prophets of Antioch who had been ſo active in the buſineſs of the image and oracle abovementioned. The children of Maximin alſo, and his favourites in general, were put to death †.

Thus ended this great perſecution, till it was revived for a ſhort time by Licinius, A. D. 316. On his undertaking to contend for the empire with Conſtantine, knowing that the chriſtians would take the part of his rival, he hoped, no doubt, to ſecure the attachment of

* De Mortibus Perſecutorum, Cap. 49. p. 90.

† Euſeb. Hiſt. Lib. ix. Cap. 11. p. 459.

the heathens (who in the time of the late perſecution were by much the majority of the ſubjects of the empire) by ſhewing himſelf hoſtile to chriſtianity. He began with expelling all chriſtians from his own family. In the next place he deprived them of all the military honours they had enjoyed in the cities. He then contrived to cut off ſeveral of the more eminent biſhops, on other pretences than their being chriſtians; and he expreſsly forbade their aſſembling in ſynods*. Some churches in Pontus he ſhut up, and others he levelled with the ground, on the pretence that it was more favourable to health for ſuch crowds of people to aſſemble in the open air. He more expreſsly forbade any women to frequent the places of worſhip, ordering that they ſhould be inſtructed by other women at home. He then proceeded to confiſcate the goods of chriſtians; and laſtly, threatened them with death. At the ſame time he ſtrictly forbade any perſons affording the leaſt relief or aſſiſtance to thoſe who ſhould be confined in priſon, under the penalty of being ſubject to the ſame puniſhment themſelves.

The governors of provinces, ſeeing the diſpoſition of their maſter, ſubjected the biſhops

* Vita Conſt. Lib. i. Cap. 51. p. 527.

to the ſame puniſhments with the greateſt miſcreants, and ſome were even cut into ſmall pieces, and given for food to feed fiſhes. On this the chriſtians began to flee once more, and as Euſebius ſays, the fields and ſolitudes, the mountains and the foreſts, received them *. Licinius was proceeding to the greateſt extremities in this perſecution, when his courſe was cut ſhort by the victories of Conſtantine over him.

SECTION IV.

Of the Martyrs of Paleſtine.

THAT we may be able to form a clearer idea of the cruelty and extent of this perſecution, I ſhall give a ſeparate account of the martyrs of Paleſtine from a particular tract of Euſebius, ſubjoined to his eighth book of eccleſiaſtical hiſtory. The truth of the facts cannot be queſtioned, as the author was in the country at the time, and wrote from his own knowledge.

* Euſeb. Hiſt. Lib. x. Cap. 8. p. 489, &c. Vita Conſt. Lib. i. Cap. 51, 52, 53. p. 527. Lib. ii. Cap. 1, 2. p. 535.

The

The firſt of theſe martyrs was Procopius of Cæſarea, who was beheaded on the ſeventh of the ides of June, in the firſt year of the perſecution. After him many other clergy of the ſame province ſuffered with great conſtancy. Not a few, however, found their courage fail them. The reſt were tortured in various ways; and ſome were ſaved by the by-ſtanders crying out, that they had ſacrificed, though they really had not. And though one of them ſhouted out that he had not ſacrificed, he was not allowed to be heard; of ſo great account did they make it to induce perſons to apoſtatize, or make it believed that they had done ſo. In conſequence of this, out of a conſiderable number who were accuſed at one particular time, only two, Alpheus and Zacheus, ſuffered; but they bore various modes of torture, confeſſing all the while that there was but one God, and one King, the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and were then beheaded. This was on the fifteenth of the calends of December*.

On the ſame day ſuffered Romanus, a deacon of Cæſarea, at Antioch. That was the day on which the churches were demoliſhed. Seeing the people going in crowds to ſacrifice, he was moved with zeal, and could not

* Euſeb. Hiſt. Lib. viii. Cap. 1. p. 407.

forbear upbraiding them for their conduct. On this he was ſeized, and being threatened with fire, heard the ſentence with a ſerene and cheerful countenance; then being tied to the ſtake, and the fuel heaped about him, while the officers were waiting for the orders of the emperor, who was preſent, he himſelf called for the fire. This being noticed, he was carried before the emperor, and there his tongue was cut out, himſelf preſenting it for the purpoſe. After this he was thrown into priſon, where he was cruelly tortured in the ſtocks, and then ſtrangled. This was in the firſt year of the perſecution, which extended to the biſhops and clergy only *.

In the ſecond year the perſecution extended to perſons of every deſcription, and in this year it was that Timotheus, having borne every kind of torture, was conſumed by a ſlow fire at Gaza, as was mentioned before. At the ſame time Agapius and Thecla were ſentenced to be thrown to the wild beaſts, and while the people were exulting in the idea of this ſpectacle, ſix young men, Timolaus of Pontus, Dionyſius of Tripolis, Romulus, a ſub-deacon of the church of Dioſpolis, two Egyptians, Paucis and Alexander, and alſo

* Euſeb. Hiſt. Lib. viii. Cap. 2. p. 409.

another Alexander of Gaza, having firſt cauſed their own hands to be tied, as ready for martyrdom, went all together to Urbanus, the governor, who was then going into the amphitheatre, acknowledging themſelves to be chriſtians, and ſhewing that they were not afraid of the wild beaſts. The governor and his companions, being aſtoniſhed at this, ordered them to priſon. A few days after, being joined by Agapius, who had borne various kinds of torture, and by Dionyſius, who had ſupplied them with neceſſaries, they were all beheaded together at Cæſarea, the ninth of the calends of April.

At this time Diocletian and Maximian reſigned the empire, after which followed ſeveral wars, which terminated in the ſettlement of the empire under Conſtantine; but, in the mean time, Maximin being advanced to the empire, and governing in the Eaſt, the perſecution raged with more violence than before; and when the people were diſperſed in crowds, and flying where they could for ſafety, Apphianus, who was not twenty years old, and of an opulent family of Berytus, diſtinguiſhed himſelf in an eminent manner by his courage and conſtancy. On becoming a chriſtian he had left his relations, who con-

tinued heathens, and came to Cæſarea, where he became intimately acquainted with Euſebius, and lived in the ſame houſe with him. This perſon, without communicating his deſign to any one, went of his own accord to Urbanus, and would have diſſuaded him from ſacrificing; but being ſeized by the guards, and cruelly beaten, he was thrown into priſon, and being there tortured, he was brought before the governor. There, refuſing to ſacrifice, his fleſh was torn to the very bones and bowels, and moreover ſo bruiſed by being beaten with leaden balls, that they who were the beſt acquainted with him, could not know him. Not yielding at this torture, lint moiſtened with oil was put round his feet, and fire being ſet to it, the fleſh was burned to the very bones. He was then remanded to priſon, and three days after thrown into the ſea. This was on the fourth of the nones of April*.

About the ſame time a youth of the name of Ulpian, after being cruelly beaten, was put into a bag, together with a dog and a ſerpent, and then thrown into the ſea. Ædeſius, the brother of Apphianus, after enduring various tortures, was condemned to the mines of Paleſtine. But having by ſome means or other

* Euſeb. Hiſt. Lib. viii. Cap. 4. p. 413.

got

got his liberty, he went to Alexandria, and there ſeeing the governor inſulting and abuſing ſome chriſtians in a ſhocking manner, he went to him, and behaving much in the ſame manner as his brother had done before him, he was expoſed to various kinds of torture, and then thrown into the ſea*.

In the fourth year of the perſecution, on the twelfth of the calends of December, it being the birth day of Maximin, ſplendid games were exhibited in his preſence; and then Agapius, who was mentioned before, as having been ſentenced together with Thecla to be thrown to the wild beaſts, was brought before the emperor, along with a ſlave who was ſaid to have murdered his maſter. This ſlave had his life granted him, and the clemency of the emperor was greatly extolled by the mob; but Agapius, refuſing his liberty on the terms of renouncing his religion, was firſt of all thrown into the way of an enraged ſhe bear, which he met of his own accord; and then after being torn by her, before he was quite dead, he was carried back to priſon, and the day following he was thrown into the ſea, with ſtones faſtened to his legs†.

* Euſeb. Hiſt. Lib. viii. Cap. 5. p. 416.
† Ibid. Cap. 6. p. 417.

In

In the fifth year of the perſecution, on the fourth of the nones of April, being Sunday, Theodoſia, a young woman of Tyre, not eighteen years old, being at Cæſarea, went to ſome perſons who were then acknowledging themſelves to be chriſtians in the preſence of the governor, probably to aſk their prayers after their martyrdom, which was no uncommon thing at that time. Being noticed and preſented to the governor, he firſt inſulted her in the groſſeſt manner, and then ordered her ſides and breaſts to be torn with iron hooks to the very bones; and while ſhe yet breathed, preſerving a ſerene and placid countenance, ſhe was thrown into the ſea. After this the governor, turning to the other confeſſors, ordered them to be ſent to the mines of Phænus in Paleſtine.

On the nones of November, Sylvanus, then a preſbyter, and confeſſor, but afterwards a biſhop, was condemned to the ſame mines, the joints of his feet being firſt diſabled with hot irons. At the ſame time Domninus, a perſon diſtinguiſhed by many confeſſions, was ſentenced to be burned alive. The ſame cruel governor ordered three to fight as gladiators, a venerable old man, Auxentius, to be thrown to the wild beaſts, and ſome per-

ſons of middle age to be firſt caſtrated, and then ſent to the mines.

Others, after enduring cruel tortures, the ſame governor threw into priſon, and among theſe was the excellent Pamphilus, to whom Euſebius was ſo much attached. The governor having heard of his character, expected to ſee a ſpecimen of his eloquence and philoſophy; but on his refuſing to ſacrifice, he was ſo much enraged, that he ordered him to be ſubjected to the greateſt torture, and not yielding to it, though his ſides were torn with the iron hooks, he was thrown into priſon together with the reſt. Euſebius obſerves, that not long after, this very governor, who had been in the higheſt favour with Maximin, was publicly diſgraced by him, and then condemned to loſe his head*.

In the ſixth year of the perſecution, ninety-ſeven men, with women and children, were ſent from Porphyrites in Egypt into Paleſtine, where Firmilian, the governor who had ſucceeded Urbanus, ordered the joints and ſinews of their left feet to be deſtroyed by fire, their right eyes to be dug out, and the ſockets to be burned with an hot iron. Then he ſent them to the mines, together with thoſe

* Euſeb. Hiſt. Lib. viii. Cap. 7. p. 418.

who

who had been condemned to ſerve as gladiators, but who had refuſed to learn their proper exerciſes. Theſe had been brought before Maximin himſelf, and after having been tortured with hunger and ſcourging, had been condemned to this ſecond puniſhment.

After theſe, others who had been apprehended at Gaza, in a meeting where the ſcriptures were read, were treated in the ſame manner, with thoſe from Egypt, with reſpect to their feet and eyes, and ſome had their ſides torn beſides. Of theſe one woman, who reproached her judge for threatening her with violation, was firſt ſcourged, and when ſhe was placed on the engine of torture, and they were tearing her ſides with the hooks, another woman exclaimed againſt their proceedings, and aſked how they could torture her ſiſter in that manner. This ſo provoked the judge, that he ordered her to be ſeized, and on her refuſing to ſacrifice, ſhe was inſtantly expoſed to greater torture than any before her; and after that both the women were burned together. One of them was born in the neighbourhood of Gaza, and the other, who was called Valentina, was of Cæſarea.

Pre-

Preſently after followed the execution of Paulus, who being indulged with leave to pray before he was beheaded, prayed aloud, firſt for the peace of the whole chriſtian church, and then for the converſion of the Jews, the Samaritans, and the Gentiles, that they might be brought to the knowledge of the true God. He prayed more eſpecially for the company preſent, for the judge who had condemned him, for the emperors, and for his executioners, that what they were going to do might not be imputed to them. All were much affected by this prayer, but notwithſtanding this, he was beheaded according to his ſentence. This was on the eighth of the calends of Auguſt, Preſently after one hundred and eighty more were brought from Egypt, and being firſt maimed, as the others from the ſame country had been before, in their left feet and right eyes, were ſent by the orders of Maximin; ſome to the mines of Paleſtine, and others to thoſe of Cilicia*.

After this there was a little reſpite of the perſecution, but it was ſoon renewed with as much violence as ever, freſh orders being given by Maximin to all the governors of provinces, and other officers, to reſtore the heathen temples, and to compel all perſons, men,

* Euſeb. Hiſt. Lib. viii. Cap. 8. p. 420.

women,

women, ſlaves, and children to ſacrifice. Orders were alſo given that every thing that was ſold in the market ſhould be conſecrated by libations, and that all who came to the public baths ſhould be compelled by the guards to perform the cuſtomary rites. This appeared extravagant and unreaſonable even to the heathens themſelves, ſo that no perſon would accuſe any of the chriſtians. But they were forward, as uſual, to declare themſelves.

Three in particular went together to the preſident as he was ſacrificing, entreating him to deſiſt, and to worſhip the Creator of the world. On this, finding that they were chriſtians, he ordered them to be executed, but without previous torture. This was on the thirteenth of the ides of November. At the ſame time a young woman of the name of Emmathas, being brought before the judge, was firſt dragged in a cruel manner through the city naked to the waiſt, and beaten with thongs, after which ſhe was burned alive. This preſident Firmilian forbade the burial of the martyrs, and had them watched night and day for that purpoſe; ſo that the dogs being permitted to tear them, and drag them about, the whole city was full of bones and entrails, a horrid ſpectacle to every body.

The

The following month, on the fourteenth of the calends of January, ſome Egyptians, who had been ſent to perform ſome kind offices to their countrymen, who had been mutilated, and ſent to the mines of Cilicia, were ſeized at the gates of Cæſarea; and ſome of them were treated in the ſame manner as thoſe whom they came to relieve, being lamed in one foot, and having their right eyes put out; but three of them, being ſent to Aſcalon, ſuffered in a different manner, two of them being beheaded and one burned alive. On the third of the ides of January, Petrus Apſelamus, being exhorted by his judges to conſider his youth, but preſerving his conſtancy, was burned in the ſame fire with Aſclepius a Marcionite, whoſe zeal, ſays our author, was not according to knowledge*. But did not this man die for the very ſame truth for which the reſt ſuffered, viz. as a chriſtian, without any regard to his particular opinions with reſpect to chriſtianity. Such is the lamentable prejudice of ſome chriſtians, that they can allow no merit except to thoſe of their own way of thinking.

Our author next proceeds to give a more

* Euſeb. Hiſt. Lib. viii. Cap. 10. p. 426.

par-

particular account of the ſufferings of his dear Pamphilus, a man diſtinguiſhed by every virtue; his indifference to the world, his charity to the poor, his attachment to philoſophy, and eſpecially his ſtudy of the ſcriptures, to whoſe life Euſebius devoted three entire books. He then gives an account of his eleven companions in tribulation, among whom was Valens, an old man, a deacon of the church of Jeruſalem, who greatly excelled in the knowledge of the ſcriptures, and Paulus, who had been tortured before. When theſe three had been confined two years, they were joined by five Egyptians, who had been ſent to viſit their brethren in Cilicia, and like the former had been apprehended at the gates of Cæſarea, and the next day, which was the fourteenth of the calends of March, they were brought before the judge, together with Pamphilus and his friends.

At firſt the judge attempted to ſhake the fortitude of theſe Egyptians, by various kinds of torture; but this having no effect, they were ſentenced to die. Then Pamphilus and his friends, being aſked whether they would at length obey the emperor, and refuſing to do it, were likewiſe ordered for execution. On

this

this one Porphyrius, a young man of the family of Pamphilus, called out of the crowd, begging that he might be permitted to bury his maſter. But the judge, finding him to be a chriſtian, ordered him to be tortured in the moſt excruciating manner; and when he expreſſed no ſenſe of pain, he ordered him to be thrown into a large pile of fire; and thus he died before his maſter. The fate of this Porphyrius was told to Pamphilus by one Seleucus, a confeſſor, and who had been a ſoldier. This being obſerved, he alſo was carried to the preſident, and by him ordered to be executed.

After this Theodulus, a venerable old man, of the governor's own family, and who had been much eſteemed by him on account of his faithful ſervices, behaving as Seleucus had done, his maſter was more enraged at him than at any of the reſt, ſo that he ſentenced him to be crucified. The laſt of the twelve was Julianus, of Cappadocia, who hearing of the execution of theſe martyrs, ran to ſee it, and ſeeing their bodies on the ground, he, out of reſpect, kiſſed them. This being obſerved, he was brought to Firmilian, who ordered him to be burned alive, a ſentence for which he gave God thanks. The bodies

of all theſe twelve were watched four days and nights, that they might be devoured by wild beaſts; but as they lay all that time untouched, they were ordered to be buried. While the caſe of theſe twelve martyrs was much talked of, Adrian and Eubulus, of Manganea, came to Cæſarea to ſee the other confeſſors; but being there apprehended, they were firſt tortured, and then ſentenced to be thrown to the wild beaſts. Two days after this, viz. the third of the nones of March, Adrian was expoſed to a lion, and then run through with a ſword; and on the nones of March, Eubulus was treated in the ſame manner. This cloſes the account of thoſe who ſuffered martyrdom in Cæſarea only. Some time after, this governor Firmilian was himſelf beheaded *.

Here our author ſays he might relate the degradation of ſome biſhops and clergy to the ſervile offices of taking care of the emperor's camels and horſes, &c. and the torturing of others by the governors of provinces, to make them diſcover the treaſures of their churches, and alſo ſome things of a different nature, and leſs honourable to the chriſtians, eſpecially their ſhameful diſſenſions among themſelves

* Euſeb. Hiſt. Lib. viii. Cap. 11. p. 427.

in

in the very time of the perſecution, referring to the Meletians, and the Donatiſts, of whom an account will be given hereafter; but he apologiſes for not entering into theſe particulars*, and proceeds to give an account of the ſeventh year of the perſecution, in which it was greatly relaxed through all Paleſtine, there being none to accuſe the chriſtians. A great multitude of the confeſſors having been condemned to the braſs mines in that country, they had been indulged with great liberty, ſo that they formed themſelves into regular churches. But the emperor, being informed of this by the governor of the province, gave orders that they ſhould be divided into different companies; and in conſequence of this ſome were ſent to Cyprus, others to mount Libanus, and the reſt to different parts of the country, to be employed in different works. But four of the moſt diſtinguiſhed among them were ſelected, and brought before the military commander of the place. Two of theſe, viz. Peleus and Nilus, had been biſhops in Egypt, the third, ſuppoſed to be Helias, was a preſbyter, and the fourth Patermuthius, a man eminent for his benevolence. All theſe, re-

* Euſeb. Hiſt. Lib. viii. Cap. 12. p. 434.

fuſing to renounce their religion, were condemned to the flames.

Others, who, on account of their age or infirmity, were incapable of working, were ſent to live in the country, at a diſtance from the reſt. The chief of theſe was Sylvanus, biſhop of Gaza, famous for his confeſſions from the beginning of the perſecution to the end of it. There accompanied him ſeveral Egyptians, and among them one John, who had a moſt excellent memory, being able to repeat all the ſcriptures by heart; ſo that when he was reciting *memoriter* in the public congregation, Euſebius, who was preſent, thought that he had been reading. Though he had been lamed and deprived of his eyes, he ſtill enjoyed his memory. At length theſe mutilated and blind confeſſors, to the number of thirty-eight, were by the order of Maximin beheaded in one day; and this cloſed the perſecution in Paleſtine, where it had raged eight years *.

This perſecution was moſt ſeverely felt in the Eaſt, as Lybia, Egypt, Paleſtine, Syria, and thence to Illyricum. In the Weſt the chriſtians were more favourably treated.

* Euſeb. Hiſt. Lib. viii. Cap. 13. p. 435.

Con-

Conſtantius contented himſelf with demoliſhing their churches, and, in compliance with the diſpoſition of his colleagues, he could not do leſs*. According to Euſebius, he did not even do this†.

SECTION V.

Of ſome Martyrdoms, the Accounts of which, though Ancient, are mixed with Fable, viz. that of Boniface; and thoſe of Tarachus, Probus, and Andronicus.

NOTWITHSTANDING the mixture of fable in the hiſtories of the martyrdoms, which I ſhall relate in this ſection, yet as it can hardly be doubted but that they had a foundation in truth, I do not think it right wholly to omit them. But I ſhall not trouble the reader with all the fabulous circumſtances with which they are mixed. Beſides, it is no leſs inſtructive to us at this day to ſee the faults than the virtues of the primitive chriſ-

* De Mortibus Perſecutorum, Cap. 15. p. 29.

† Hiſt. Lib. viii. Cap. 13. p. 396.

tians, and no fair writer has any motive to conceal them.

According to Euſebius, and the moſt authentic hiſtorians, chriſtians ſoon laid an undue ſtreſs upon martyrdom, as if the mere ſuffering for chriſtianity, independently of the temper of mind with which a man had lived, or with which he died, would certainly recommend him to God, and even give him a rank and influence in another world to which nothing elſe could raiſe men. Some of the martyrs themſelves had the ſame ideas, and were led by them to a very improper conduct before their deaths, in their behaviour to the magiſtrates, and in the church, if they ſurvived ſuch ſufferings as intitled them to the name of *martyrs*.

Chriſtianity is no more anſwerable for this, than for any other abuſe of its doctrines or inſtitutions. It was propoſed to perſons in all ſtates of mind, and was embraced by many whoſe diſcordant principles and maxims it could not always eradicate, and therefore was held together with them. Now, nothing had got faſter hold on the minds of all men at the time of the promulgation of chriſtianity, than the notion of the efficacy of certain *actions*, independently of any temper of mind with

with which they were performed, to recommend them to the favour, and to ſecure the protection of the gods, thoſe inviſible powers by which the world is governed. With this view they had been uſed to do, and to ſuffer, the moſt extraordinary things, and had inflicted upon themſelves, as well as upon others, the greateſt cruelties. We ſee in the Faquirs of Indoſtan, and the tortures which the people of Mexico voluntarily endured, that this idea was not peculiar to the old world, but that it is produced by the ſame ignorance of the real cauſes of things, and of the nature of God, at all times.

Thoſe, therefore, who make due allowance for the operation of foreign influence upon the human mind, will not be ſurprized, or offended, at a great mixture of ſimilar ſuperſtition among chriſtians, who had been heathens. They aſcribed to the water of baptiſm a virtue ſimilar to that of their former rites of purification, to the Lord's ſupper that of their myſtical initiations, and to martyrdom that of thoſe ſeverities which the heathens had ſome times been uſed to exerciſe upon themſelves.

Alſo, the natural effect of having entertained theſe ideas of the value of ſuffering,

and the high rank it gave to the ſufferers, would lead ſome of the martyrs to behave with that contempt of pain, and that inſolence towards thoſe who inflicted it, which is very unbecoming chriſtians. There can be no true propriety of behaviour without juſt ſentiments. In all other caſes an abatement is to be made for the undue influence of ſuperſtition, or ſuch motives as are foreign to true religion. On this account the heroiſm of Chriſt, and that of the early martyrs, is as much ſuperior to that of many in the later ages, as pure chriſtianity is ſuperior to that debaſed kind of it which poſſeſſed the minds of many of thoſe who came after them.

Chriſt and the apoſtles had no ſuperſtition, that is, they did not connect the favour of God with any thing beſides a good diſpoſition of mind, and that upright conduct in life which ſprings from it; and therefore they conſidered martyrdom, ſimply as an act of obedience to the will of God, which requires that, in all events, we adhere to truth and a a good conſcience, from the perſuaſion that, if we have not our recompence in this world, we ſhall certainly find it in another. They did not teach men to ruſh upon perſecution, but rather prudently, though with innocence,

to avoid it; and Paul expreſſly ſays, that though he ſhould give his body to be burned, it would avail him nothing without charity, or a principle of benevolence.

On the contrary, it cannot be denied that ſome of the martyrs expoſed themſelves to torture and death, from the idea that the mere ſuffering in that cauſe would cancel all their crimes, and intitle them to the moſt diſtinguiſhed place in heaven, for which it is poſſible that their real diſpoſitions would very little contribute to qualify them. However, the fortitude with which they died in this cauſe adds to the evidence of chriſtianity, as it is a proof of ſuch a general perſuaſion concerning its truth, as could never have been produced, I do not ſay in the minds of thoſe particular men, but in thoſe of the great body of chriſtians, without a real foundation in hiſtorical fact. Theſe particular men might become chriſtians, and enter the liſt of martyrs, without being able to give a rational account of their faith; but if there never had been a well grounded faith in it originally, their inſufficient faith, if it may be ſo called, could not have had any exiſtence.

Nor are we to wonder at the mixture of fabulous circumſtances in the accounts of ſome

of the ancient martyrdoms, even though they were written near the time of the tranſactions. Many of the chriſtians of that age, naturally enough, thought that theſe martyrs were as much the objects of the divine attention, as they were of theirs; and, conſequently, every thing that appeared extraordinary relating to them, would be attributed to a divine interpoſition; and being often repeated, would ſoon be ſo magnified, and altered, without any intention to miſrepreſent, or deceive, that an honeſt hiſtorian, a little tinctured with the ſame ſuperſtition, would unavoidably be what we ſhould call credulous, and not be able to ſeparate the fabulous circumſtances from the real ones. And yet, notwithſtanding this mixture of fable, there may be no great difficulty at this day, when our minds are free from the ſuperſtition which miſled *them*, to ſeparate the fabulous circumſtances in the narrative from thoſe that are authentic, and to perceive a clear foundation for credit in the principal articles, through all the heterogeneous matter that has been tranſmitted along with them*.

* I have two editions of the following hiſtories, the one in Latin, annexed to the hiſtory of Perpetua and Felicitas, publiſhed by Valeſius, in 1664; and the other in Greek, ſubjoined to Palladius's life of Chryſoſtom,

by

It was in the reign of Diocletian, that Boniface of Rome (of whoſe martyrdom an account was firſt publiſhed from a Latin MS. in the Vatican library, and afterwards from the Greek) ſuffered at Tarſus. Leaving out ſome evidently fabulous circumſtances, the ſtory is as follows.

While one Simplicius was exerciſing great cruelties againſt the chriſtians at Tarſus, in Cilicia, there was at Rome a woman of the name of Aglaes, of a good family, and very rich. She had lived in criminal converſation with Boniface, who was her principal ſteward, a man addicted to all vices, except that he was very compaſſionate and generous; ſo that he would ſeek out objects of diſtreſs, that he might relieve them. After ſome time, Aglaes, being touched with remorſe, repreſented to Boniface the enormity of their conduct, particularly reminding him of a future judgment, and that then thoſe perſons would be reckoned the friends of Chriſt, who ſhould miniſter to the wants of his ſuffering ſervants. She then directed him to go into the Eaſt,

by Bigottius, 1680, both printed at Paris. The laſt contains alſo the abridged accounts of them by Simeon Metaphraſtes. I drew up the following account from the Latin, which came to my hands firſt, and afterwards corrected it by the Greek.

where

where the perſecution was moſt violent, and bring the relics of ſome of the martyrs; that by building oratories to them, and ſhewing them due reverence, ſhe might be benefited by their means; making no diſtinction between ſervices done to the living, and reſpect paid to the dead.

This office Boniface cheerfully undertook; ſaying to his miſtreſs, If I find any relics, I will bring them; but if my own body ſhould come, receive it as ſuch. She, thinking that he trifled, bid him leave off his drunkenneſs and folly, that he might be worthy to have the cuſtody of the holy relics. He was, however, as ſerious as his miſtreſs, and prepared himſelf for the journey by prayer and faſting.

When he was arrived at Tarſus, hearing that, at that very time, ſeveral were ſuffering martyrdom in the ſtadium, or public place, he bid the ſervants look out for an inn, and take care of their beaſts, while he went where he wiſhed to go. When he came to the ſtadium, where the chriſtians were ſuffering, he ſaw ſome hanging with their heads downwards, and fire under them, ſome extended on four pieces of wood, by the ſeparation of which by ſcrews, their limbs were ſtretched; ſome

ſome with their features defaced, ſome torn with hooks, ſome with their hands cut off, and others with their hands tied behind them, and cruelly ſcourged, in all twenty men, while the ſpectators were filled with the greateſt horror.

Boniface, however, without being terrified from his purpoſe, went and kiſſed ſome of them who were under torture, requeſting that they would pray for him, that he might be worthy to be their aſſociate; and then ſitting down by them, he exhorted them to take courage, by reminding them of their approaching happineſs.

The judge, perceiving him, enquired who he was who was ſhewing that contempt of him and of the gods, and ordered him to be brought before him. Being aſked who he was, he replied that he was a chriſtian, and that by the help of God he ſhould deſpiſe him and his tribunal. On his refuſing to ſacrifice, he was placed on the engine of torture, and his ſides were torn till the bones appeared, while he ſhewed no ſenſe of pain, and kept his eyes directed towards his fellow-ſufferers.

After he had borne this torture an hour, the judge aſked him again, if he would ſacrifice;

fice; and as he perſiſted in his refuſal, he had reeds thruſt under the nails of his hands, and melted lead was ordered to be poured down his throat. The ſpectators ſeeing this, cried out, "Great is the God of the chriſtians, and "of theſe holy martyrs;" and ruſhing with one accord, they overturned the altar, and threw ſtones at the judge, who was glad to make his eſcape.

The next day he again ordered Boniface to be brought before him, and reproached him for his folly, in putting his confidence in a man, and one who had been crucified. But he, returning his reproaches, though in a manner which did not become the meekneſs of a chriſtian, ſaid that his maſter Jeſus Chriſt had borne all theſe things before him, from a deſire that all men might be ſaved. At this the judge was much enraged, and after enduring more torture, and an ineffectual attempt to ſtifle him in hot oil, Boniface was at length beheaded. This was on the ides of May.

In the mean time, the ſervants of Boniface were looking for him every where, expecting to find him in ſome tavern, or ſtew; when they were informed that ſuch a perſon as they deſcribed had ſuffered martyrdom the day before,

fore, in the ſtadium. Finding it to be ſo, and paying five hundred ſolidi for the body, they wrapped it in ſpices, and conveyed it to Rome. Aglaes, being informed of this, met them five ſtadia from the city, on the Latin way, and there ſhe built an oratory to receive the relics. After this ſhe renounced the world, manumitted her ſlaves, and gave her wealth to the poor; and after living thirteen years, was buried with Boniface.

In this narrative we ſee ſufficient traces of ſuperſtition in the times in which the martyrdom happened, but more in the writer, who probably lived in a later period, though the piece bears evident marks of conſiderable antiquity, on which account I thought I ſhould not be juſtified in overlooking it.

Of ſimilar character and authority with the preceding, is the account of the martyrdoms of Tarachus, Probus, and Andronicus, which was ſent by the chriſtians at Tarſus, where they ſuffered, to their brethren at Iconium, with a requeſt that it might be tranſmitted to thoſe in Piſidia and Pamphilia, and like the preceding, it was publiſhed firſt from an old Latin verſion, and then from the Greek. That there were ſuch martyrs cannot well be doubted; and if the piece be not a forgery, it

muſt have been written about the time of the event, which makes it more difficult to account for the fabulous circumſtances that are in it.

It was in the conſulſhip of Diocletian and Maximian the ſecond time, on the twelfth of the calends of June, that the three perſons above-mentioned were brought before Numerianus Maximus, preſident of Cilicia. The firſt of them had been a ſoldier, but had procured his diſcharge upon his converſion to chriſtianity, which, with other caſes of the ſame nature, ſhew that many chriſtians in the early ages conſidered the profeſſion of bearing arms as unbecoming a chriſtian, and that on this account, though they might not think it abſolutely unlawful, they declined it. Both he (Tarachus) and his two companions acknowledged themſelves to be chriſtians, and reſiſted all the endeavours of the governor, whether by intreaty or torture, to ſacrifice to the heathen gods; but, upon the whole, I am hardly more pleaſed with their behaviour than with that of the judge. He was inſolent and brutal, but he was not anſwered with the meekneſs that became a chriſtian, but with a degree of contempt very unbecoming that character.

They

They had three hearings, the firſt at Tarſus, the ſecond at Mopſueſtia, and the third at Anazarbus; and after enduring the moſt dreadful tortures, they were carried (for they were not then able to walk) to the amphitheatre, and thrown in the way of ſeveral wild beaſts; and when theſe could not be made to hurt them, they were beheaded. Their bodies, having been purpoſely mixed with many others, were diligently ſought for by their brethren, and diſcovered, as they pretended, in anſwer to their prayers, by a bright ſtar, which came from heaven, and reſted upon each of them, and which afterwards conducted them to a place of ſafety. At length they were depoſited in a mountain, where the three perſons who wrote this account, viz. Marcion, Felix, and Verus, fixed their own habitation, determined to be buried along with them. The particulars of the examination before the preſident, they ſay, they had from one of the guards, named Sebaſtus, who was preſent.

As many chriſtians at this period did behave as theſe martyrs are ſaid to have done, it may not be amiſs to relate the particulars of the behaviour of one of them. In ſome reſpects, it was, no doubt, proper, and worthy of com-

mendation; and when it was improper, it may not be the leſs inſtructive, as a feature of the times; and though much of it may be ſuppoſed to be the language of the narrator, rather than that of the martyr, it will give us an idea of what was generally eſteemed to be proper and heroic behaviour on ſuch occaſions. It is not my wiſh to magnify, or in any reſpect to diſguiſe, the actions of chriſtians, but to repreſent them as they really were. For this purpoſe I ſhall, without any other reaſon for a preference, give the examinations of Tarachus, who was preſented firſt; and for the ſake of conciſeneſs, I ſhall recite them in the form of dialogue.

When the preſident had taken his place, Demetrius the centurion ſaid, "There were "preſented to your highneſs at Pompeiopo-"lis, by Eutolmius Palladius, one of your "officers, ſome impious perſons who do not "obey the orders of the emperors, and they "are now before your tribunal." Tarachus being then produced, the preſident ſaid,

P. What is thy name, for I interrogate thee the firſt, becauſe thou art the oldeſt?

T. I am a chriſtian.

P. I did not as yet aſk thee concerning that impious appellation. Tell me thy name.

T. I

T. I am a chriſtian.

P. Break his jaws, and bid him anſwer my queſtion properly.

T. I do tell you my name, but if you aſk what my parents called me, it is Tarachus, and when I was a ſoldier, I was called Victor.

P. Of what country art thou, Tarachus?

T. I am a Roman, but born at Claudiopolis in Syria, and becauſe I was a chriſtian, I renounced the ſervice.

P. Thou wert not worthy to ſerve, thou wicked wretch. But who gave thee thy diſcharge?

T. I applied to Polybio, my officer, and he granted it to me.

P. Then reſpect thy old age. I wiſh that thou mayeſt be one of thoſe who comply with the wiſhes of the emperors, that I may diſtinguiſh thee by ſome honour. Wherefore come and ſacrifice to our gods, which the emperors themſelves worſhip.

T. But I ſay now, as I did before, that thoſe gods were only men.

P. Sacrifice to the gods, and leave that ſubtlety.

T. I ſerve my God, and ſacrifice, not with blood, but with a pure heart. For God does not want ſuch ſacrifices.

P. I have compaſſion on thy old age, and adviſe thee to lay aſide all vanity, and ſacrifice to our gods.

T. I do not forſake the law of God.

P. Wherefore, come, and ſacrifice.

P. I cannot be guilty of impiety. I ſaid, that I honour the law of God.

P. There is another law beſides that, thou wretch.

T. You, who are impious, worſhip wood and ſtone, the work of men's hands.

P. Give him a blow, and tell him not to be fooliſh.

T. I do not relinquiſh that folly which gives me ſalvation.

P. I will make thee ceaſe from that folly, and teach thee wiſdom.

T. Do what you pleaſe; you have power over my body.

P. Strip him, and beat him with rods on the ground.

T. Now you have made me truly wiſe, ſtrengthening me with blows. I wiſh to be ſtrengthened more and more, in the name of God, and of his Chriſt.

P. Wicked and curſed wretch, Doſt thou confeſs that thou ſerveſt two Gods, and yet denieſt the gods?

T. I

T. I confeſs him who is truly God.

P. Thou now confeſſedſt God, and Chriſt.

T. For he is the Son of God, the hope of chriſtians, by ſuffering for whom we are ſaved.

P. Leave thy prating. Come, and ſacrifice.

T. I do not prate, but ſpeak the truth. I have prayed in this manner ſixty and five years, and do not depart from the truth.

Demetrius the centurion here ſaid, O man, ſpare thyſelf, and ſacrifice to the gods. Be perſuaded by me.

T. Stand off from me with thy advice, thou miniſter of Satan.

P. Let him be confined in priſon, with heavy iron chains, and bring in another.

The ſecond examination of Tarachus.

P. Call thoſe impious wretches, who obey a wicked law.

Demetrius the centurion. Here they are.

P. Old age is generally honourable, becauſe it is attended with good ſenſe. Wherefore if thou haſt reflected with thyſelf, Tarachus, thou wilt no longer abide by thy former reſolution. Come then, and ſacrifice to the gods, for the honour of the emperors, that I may confer honour on thee.

T. I am a chriſtian, and I wiſh that you, and the emperors themſelves, would abandon that honour for the true, that they might receive ſtrength and life from the true God.

P. Strike him on the mouth with a ſtone, and bid him ceaſe from his folly.

T. If I was a fool, I ſhould be like you.

P. Thy teeth are already beaten out; have pity on thyſelf, wretch.

T. You will never perſuade me. You are not ſtronger than he who makes me ſtrong.

P. Believe me. It will be better for thee to ſacrifice.

T. If I thought it was better, I would not ſuffer this uſage.

P. Stretch him on the rack, and beat him with freſh thongs. Tarachus making no anſwer, he ſaid, Strike him on the mouth, and bid him anſwer me.

T. My jaws are broken, how can I anſwer?

P. And doſt thou ſtill refuſe to comply? Go to the altar, and ſacrifice to the gods.

T. If you make me incapable of ſpeaking, I ſhall think the ſame.

P. I ſhall try thy obſtinacy, thou accurſed wretch,

T. Try

T. Try what you pleaſe, I ſhall conquer by him who ſtrengthens me, that is in the name of my God.

P. Bring fire, and burn his hands.

T. I do not fear thy temporal fire; but if I comply with thee, I ſhould fear eternal fire.

P. See now, thy hands are burned off. Ceaſe from thy vanity, thou madman, and ſacrifice to the gods.

T. You ſpeak as if I ſhould comply with your propoſal; but I am able to bear whatever may be prepared for me.

P. Tie his feet, and then ſuſpend him, and put fire under him.

T. I have deſpiſed thy fire, and do not fear thy ſmoke.

P. Now thou art ſuſpended, conſent, and ſacrifice.

T. Do thou ſacrifice, as thou art uſed to ſacrifice, to men. It is not lawful for me to do it.

P. Bring ſtrong vinegar and ſalt, and pour it into his noſtrils.

T. Thy vinegar is pleaſant to me, and thy ſalt has no pungency.

P. Mix muſtard with the vinegar, and put it into his noſe.

T. Thy ſervants have deceived thee. They have given me honey inſtead of vinegar.

P. Againſt the next examination, I will think of other tortures, and cure thy folly.

T. And you will find me prepared to bear them all.

P. Take him down, bind him in iron chains, and commit him to cuſtody.

At the third examination, after more queſtions and anſwers, in which Tarachus, in reply to the threats of the preſident, challenges him to do his worſt, in a manner more becoming a North-American Indian, than a chriſtian, he was again ſuſpended, his face bruiſed with ſtones, hot irons applied to his cheeks, his ears were cut off, his head ſhaved, and hot coals put upon it. After this the hot irons were put under his arm-pits, and during the whole, he ſpake as if he felt nothing; and the two others are both repreſented as behaving in a ſimilar manner, under different modes of torture.

The truth of the narrative in general I do not queſtion, as there are the moſt authentic accounts of ſome chriſtians behaving in this manner, though this is probably exaggerated; but I cannot recite the particulars, as Fleury and

and others do, with approbation. Our Saviour left no ſuch example as this. His ſenſibility was as great as his fortitude, and nothing dropped from him that ſavoured of boaſting, or of inſolence.

SECTION VI.

A general View of the civil Revolutions in the Empire, previous to the Settlement of it under Conſtantine.

NOT chuſing to interrupt the account of the perſecution with more than was abſolutely neceſſary of the *civil hiſtory* of the times, I ſhall give a ſummary view of the whole in this place; and this is the more neceſſary, as, in the conteſt for power among ſo many competitors for the empire as aroſe preſently after the perſecution began, the revolutions, which had a great influence with reſpect to it, were ſo great and rapid, that it is not eaſy to retain them in memory.

In the ſecond year of the perſecution Diocletian was ſeized with a diſorder which affected

fected his intellects, and, this together with the management of Galerius, induced him to abdicate the empire*. And he prevailed upon his colleague Maximian Herculius to do the ſame. This was on the calends of April, A. D. 304. Diocletian retired to Salona in Dalmatia, and Maximian to Lucania in Italy.

In conſequence of theſe reſignations, the two Cæſars, Conſtantius (who had divorced Helena, by whom he had Conſtantine, and had married the daughter-in-law of Maximian) and Maximian Galerius (who had alſo divorced his wife, in order to marry the daughter of Diocletian) were proclaimed emperors; and of theſe the former, who diſcontinued the perſecution, governed in the Weſt, and the latter, who kept it up with great rigour, ruled in the Eaſt, A. D. 306, Galerius appointed two Cæſars, Severus and Maximin, his ſiſter's ſons, giving Italy to Severus, and the Eaſt to Maximin. All this time he detained Conſtantine at Rome, unwilling that he ſhould be Cæſar. But the young man making his eſcape to his father, who was then at York in Britain, he was by

* Euſeb. Hiſt. Lib. viii. Cap. 13. p. 396. De Mortibus Perſecutorum, Cap. 9. p. 17.

the

the army ſaluted by the appellation of emperor.

On this Maxentius, the ſon of Maximian Herculius, cauſed himſelf to be elected emperor at Rome, rejecting ſome propoſals which had been made to him for an accommodation by Conſtantine. Galerius, hearing of this difference, ſent Severus with an army to Rome; but Maxentius, by corrupting his troops, defeated him, and beſieged him in Ravenna. In the midſt of theſe diſturbances, Maximian Herculius went to Rome; and having procured himſelf to be proclaimed emperor a ſecond time, joined his ſon before Ravenna; and not being able to force the place, he deceived Severus by a treaty, and got him aſſaſſinated. After this Galerius marched to Rome, and finding his forces not ſufficient for the enterprize, he appointed Licinius, an old friend of his, to be Cæſar. A. D. 307.

In the mean time old Maximian, after making a vain attempt to ſupplant his ſon, reſigned the empire once more, but with a view to perſuade Diocletian to join him in reſuming it. Not ſucceeding in this, he went into Gaul, and joined Conſtantine, giving him his daughter Fauſta in marriage. But

after-

afterwards, endeavouring to ſupplant his ſon-in-law, as he had before done with reſpect to his own ſon, he was beſieged in Marſeilles, and being taken was put to death.

A. D. 310, Galerius who had before made Licinius *Cæſar*, gave him the title of *Auguſtus*, and *emperor;* and on this Maximin took the ſame title, without conſulting Galerius. Though Maxentius and Galerius were men of ſimilar diſpoſitions, both naturally cruel, and both of them perſecutors of the chriſtians, they hated one another, and the empire was dreadfully ravaged by the civil wars between them; and the conſequence of this was a ſevere famine at Rome.

A. D. 311, Galerius was ſeized with that dreadful diſorder of which mention was made before, and which induced him to join Conſtantine in publiſhing an edict in favour of the chriſtians, not long before his death. On this event it was agreed that Conſtantine ſhould have Britain, Gaul, Spain, and Germany; Maxentius, Italy, Sicily, and Africa; Licinius, Illyricum, Dacia, and Greece; and Maximin all the Eaſt, and Egypt. After this partition of the empire, the perſecution of the chriſtians ceaſed for a ſhort time, but it was renewed by Licinius and Maximin, in

the countries which were under their dominion.

Maxentius rendering himſelf inſupportable to the people at Rome, Conſtantine was invited to come to their aſſiſtance; and having in the mean time declared himſelf a chriſtian, he defeated Maxentius and his lieutenants in ſeveral battles, in the laſt of which, Maxentius flying over a bridge which he laid over the Tiber, it broke down under him and the croud of his attendants, and he was drowned. After this victory Conſtantine publiſhed edicts in favour of the chriſtians, reſtoring to them their churches and goods, and excuſing their miniſters from all civil functions. This was A. D. 312.

Still Maximin and Licinius continued the perſecution. But A. D. 313, Licinius married the ſiſter of Conſtantine, and put a ſtop to it. Preſently after this Diocletian, who had been invited to attend the marriage, died; having ſeen chriſtianity in a more flouriſhing ſtate after the perſecution than it had ever enjoyed before. Maximin, to whom the edict of Conſtantine and Licinius in favour of the chriſtians had been ſent, did not chuſe to refuſe giving his ſanction to it altogether; but having been deceived by his prieſts, who promiſed

miſed him a ſucceſsful war againſt Licinius, and being worſted in it, he firſt put them to death, and then publiſhed an edict in favour of the chriſtians, reſtoring to them all that had been taken from them during the perſecution.

The year following, A. D. 314, Maximin was ſeized with a diſorder which occaſioned the loſs of his ſight, and reduced him to a ſkeleton; and of this, after languiſhing a long time, full of remorſe, it is ſaid, for his cruelty to the chriſtians, he died. After the death of Maximin, A. D. 315, Licinius declared war againſt Conſtantine, and not ſucceeding, they were reconciled again. The year following Licinius revived the perſecution againſt the chriſtians; and quarrelling again with Conſtantine he was defeated in ſeveral battles, and in 324, was reduced to ſurrender at diſcretion. Out of regard to his ſiſter, Conſtantine granted him his life, and fixed Theſſolonica for the place of his abode; but Licinius having recourſe to arms once more, A. D. 325, he was preſently defeated, and put to death. From this time the whole Roman empire was united under one head, and that a chriſtian.

SECTION VII.

General Obſervations on this great Perſecution, and the Effects of it.

WE cannot wonder that, after ſo long and dreadful a perſecution, in which ſuch numbers of chriſtians ſuffered death in extreme torture, many more were maimed for life, more reduced to great poverty and diſtreſs, and many diſperſed in diſtant countries, there ſhould be great joy over all the chriſtian world. The terminations of former perſecutions had little in them that reſembled this. Till this time chriſtians had never enjoyed more than a ſhort reſpite from trouble; the emperors who had been the moſt friendly to them, having been heathens, had only connived at them. From the time of Nero there had always been ſome laws in force againſt them; and in the moſt favourable times, they had been at the mercy of the populace, whoſe clamours the moſt reſolute governors of provinces, and ſometimes even the emperors themſelves, had not been able to withſtand. Whereas now, they not only found all the laws by which they had been oppreſſed

oppreſſed repealed, but new laws made expreſſly in their favour, laws by which their religion was both protected and encouraged, by an emperor who was a chriſtian as well as themſelves; and what was more than all this, their numbers, and their reſpectability, were ſo much increaſed, that there was no danger of any emperor finding it neceſſary to to ſacrifice them to the ſecurity of his power. Their enemies, deſtitute of the aid of the civil magiſtrate, and in ſome meaſure even of that of the populace, could only hate and envy them, without being able to give them any material diſturbance.

Conſtantine had fought and conquered as a chriſtian, and conſequently thoſe who fought under him muſt either have been chriſtians, or at leaſt have had no objection to ſerve him as ſuch; ſo that he had nothing to fear from any heathen competitor, which would certainly have been the caſe if any emperor in an earlier period had declared himſelf a chriſtian. This remarkable fact, viz. that of Conſtantine eſtabliſhing himſelf in the empire, and reigning ſo long as he did, undiſturbed by any heathen competitor, is an unanſwerable proof of the great progreſs that chriſtianity had made in the Roman empire; a pro-

a progreſs made by its own evidence only, and in the face of every difficulty that could poſſibly be thrown in its way, in the courſe of near three hundred years before his acceſſion. If the majority of the ſubjects of the empire were not profeſſed chriſtians at the acceſſion of Conſtantine, they had at leaſt been brought to think ſo well of chriſtianity, that they had no objection to its being the prevailing religion, and to its being countenanced by the emperor, in preference to heatheniſm.

The iſſue of the war with Licinius, which was renewed at ſeveral periods, and before the determination of which the heathen ſubjects of the empire had time enough to recollect themſelves, and to recover from any ſudden conſternation into which they might have been thrown by the rapid ſucceſſes of Conſtantine, was the laſt and moſt deciſive proof of the great ſuperiority of the chriſtians, or of thoſe who were diſpoſed to favour chriſtianity, over the bigotted heathens. Had the chriſtianity of Conſtantine given great and general offence, the ſeveral revolts of Licinius gave it the moſt favourable opportunity of ſhewing itſelf; ſo that the iſſue of this war clearly proves, that thoſe who wiſhed well to the ancient ſuperſtitions, and were zealous for the

continuance of them, were comparatively few, and that the Roman world in general thought itſelf happy in a chriſtian emperor.

I would farther obſerve, that this ſtate of things affords a ſtrong preſumptive proof of the truth of chriſtianity. The heathen religion had every advantage of antiquity, learning, and power; and yet could not prevail againſt the new religion, with the heavy diſadvantage of having a crucified Jew for its founder. Chriſtianity had no advantage from power, till by its own evidence only, and in oppoſition to every kind of power, it had prevailed ſo much, as to make it the intereſt of the ruling powers to eſpouſe it.

With reſpect to the conduct of divine providence, I would obſerve that the ſufferings of chriſtians, as well as thoſe of Chriſt himſelf, though ſo great, and of ſuch long continuance, were neceſſary to the firm eſtabliſhment of chriſtianity; and that this was neceſſary to the happineſs of mankind in future ages. For to the confirmation of their faith it was abſolutely neceſſary, that no perſon, to the end of time, ſhould ever be able to ſay, that chriſtianity had eſtabliſhed itſelf in the world by means of power, of policy, or of learning; and that its evidences had not been rigorouſly exa-

examined at a time when every means of examination were exiſting, and alſo when both its friends and enemies were ſufficiently intereſted in the examination.

Now the perſecution of chriſtians, from the very origin of their religion at Jeruſalem, in the very midſt of its moſt inveterate enemies, and for more than two centuries after this, through the whole extent of the Roman empire (the power of which over all its ſubjects was, by its conſtitution, perhaps greater than any that had ever exiſted in the world before, or that has exiſted even ſince) a period alſo that was far from being unfavourable to learning and inquiry, not preventing, but evidently promoting the ſpread of chriſtianity, is the moſt inconteſtable proof, that neither *arguments*, nor *force*, though both were exerted to the utmoſt, could prevail againſt it. On the other hand, the chriſtians, who had no alternative but abandoning their religion or their lives, would not certainly chuſe the latter without what appeared to them to be ſufficient reaſon, and ſuch as they had not taken up lightly, and without the moſt careful examination. Becauſe we do not ſee that, in any other caſes, men deliberately throw away their lives; and

 eſpe-

eſpecially that they ſubmit to long continued torture, without cauſe.

This was the ſtate of things between the friends and the enemies of chriſtianity, while the facts were recent, capable of the moſt eaſy inveſtigation, and the witneſſes were numerous. And that they who did enquire with a proper temper of mind were really ſatisfied with reſpect to theſe facts, is evident from their continuing to profeſs themſelves chriſtians notwithſtanding all the diſcouragements they lay under, and by their daily making converts of others. And it is of the greateſt importance to obſerve, that the things to be examined were plain *facts*, with reſpect to which one man's underſtanding is juſt as good as that of any other. Whatever learning or genius could do, was at firſt intirely againſt chriſtianity, becauſe its origin was wholly with the illiterate; but at length the learned themſelves, of every claſs, attached as they were to their reſpective favourite ſyſtems, were induced to abandon them, in favour of a religion which, both on account of its tenets, and of its founder and preachers, they had at firſt held in the greateſt contempt.

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A man who can ſay that, in theſe circumſtances, chriſtianity made its way in the world, as it is known to have done before the reign of Conſtantine, without its being founded on truth, muſt ſay that human nature was not the ſame thing then that it is now. And the man who can ſeriouſly aſſert this, will not be much attended to by other men. He muſt, in fact, believe infinitely more miracles, and of a more ſtupendous nature, than the chriſtian admits, and theſe both without evidence, and without an object. He muſt be a believer in the abſolute and proper infatuation of the greater part of the ſubjects of the Roman empire for the three firſt centuries. Nothing leſs than this will account for unqueſtionable facts upon his hypotheſis.

I muſt obſerve again, and enlarge a little upon the obſervation, that the things to be examined into by the friends or the enemies of chriſtianity, were not truths of an abſtract or metaphyſical nature, with reſpect to which any man, or any number of men, may form wrong judgments, and become tenaciouſly attached to them, but ſimply the truth of *facts*, which it requires nothing more than common ſenſe to judge of, and likewiſe ſuch an application of common ſenſe, or underſtanding, as

 all

all men are continually exerciſing, and therefore with reſpect to which they are the leaſt liable to make a miſtake, and form a wrong judgment.

What they had to inquire into was ſimply this, whether Chriſt, with whom many of them were perſonally acquainted wrought real miracles, whether he roſe from the dead, and whether the apoſtles and others, continued to work miracles in ſupport of his divine miſſion afterwards. With the truth or untruth of theſe facts, the apoſtles themſelves, and all their cotemporaries, muſt either have been acquainted, or might eaſily have ſatisfied themſelves. They could not therefore have been impoſed upon themſelves with reſpect to the facts, nor can it be imagined that the thouſands of that generation who ſuffered, and many of whom died, in the cauſe of chriſtianity could have any motive to impoſe upon others. We do not indeed think it neceſſary to trouble ourſelves to inveſtigate the cauſes of the ſentiments and conduct of ſingle perſons, or of a few perſons; becauſe their faculties may be deranged, or they may have been ſubjected to ſuch particular influences as cannot poſſibly be known, except perhaps to thoſe who have attended them from their infancy, and have been

been acquainted with their whole hiſtory. But this can never be ſaid of ſo many perſons, of all deſcriptions, as are well known to have embraced chriſtianity in the very age of the apoſtles, except by perſons whoſe own minds are deranged, and therefore whoſe objections it is to no purpoſe to conſider, or reply to.

But ſuppoſing the thouſands and tens of thouſands who embraced chriſtianity in the age of the apoſtles, to have been properly infatuated, ſo as to believe that they actually ſaw and heard things that had no exiſtence, the next generation had ſufficient leiſure, and ſufficient opportunity, to enquire into the facts, and this moſt extraordinary one, of the infatuation of their predeceſſors, among the reſt; and they were ſufficiently intereſted ſo to do, when, if they embraced chriſtianity, they had nothing before them but the fate of preceding chriſtians. Yet we ſee that the enquires that were made in the ſecond generation, and all the ſucceeding ones, after the apoſtles, continually added to the number of chriſtians, who kept uniformly encreaſing, among the learned and unlearned, the high and the low, the rich and the poor, till, notwithſtanding all their hardſhips, they, or their

 friends,

friends, became the more powerful part of the Roman empire.

To ſuppoſe that chriſtianity could have propagated itſelf in this manner without its being founded in truth, is to ſuppoſe, as I obſerved before (and becauſe it cannot be too much attended to, I mention it again) more miracles, and thoſe of a more extraordinary nature, than are believed by chriſtians; miracles of which no evidence can be given, and for which no reaſon can be aſſigned. For it muſt be ſuppoſed that all theſe innumerable converts to chriſtianity in the early ages imagined that they had heard and ſeen what they never had heard or ſeen, or that they had enquired into the truth of recent facts, when they had made no enquiry at all, and that they ſacrificed their eaſe, their liberty, their property, and many of them their lives, for a mere fancy, an illuſion of the brain. Their minds muſt therefore have been under a proper and miraculous infatuation, and for no purpoſe but to ſubject them to the moſt grievous ſufferings, and to delude mankind in all future ages.

Now, between this ſtrange and incredible ſuppoſition, and the truth of the goſpel hiſ-

tory,

tory, there is no medium. Admitting the facts which are related by the evangeliſts, and the author of the book of Acts, every thing that has followed to the preſent times is eaſy and natural. The converſion of the firſt chriſtians, obſtinate and reluctant as they many of them were, the converſion of others by them, and all the ſubſequent events, have an adequate cauſe, ſo that without ſuppoſing any farther miracles, all things have come by a regular progreſs, each ſtep of which is perfectly intelligible, to the ſtate in which we ſee them to be at preſent. But on no other hypotheſis can *preſent appearances*, what we ourſelves now ſee, be accounted for. On the other ſuppoſition (which, if they reflect at all, muſt be that of all unbelievers) we ſee the moſt wonderful change in the hiſtory of the world, a revolution in the minds of men, of all nations, and all deſcriptions, produced by ſupernatural deluſion; that is, a great effect without any cauſe, that a man in his ſober ſenſes would think of alleging for it.

SECTION VIII.

Of the Meletians and the Donatiſts.

WITHIN the period of which I am now treating, aroſe the different ſects of the Meletians, Donatiſts, and Manichæans; the firſt of ſmall conſequence, but the two others very conſiderable, both for extent and duration, and eſpecially the laſt of them.

Meletius was a biſhop of Lycopolis in Egypt, who was ſaid to have been depoſed for various cauſes, but eſpecially for having denied the faith, and ſacrificing, in time of perſecution, by a council, in which Peter, biſhop of Alexandria, preſided*. Meletius, however, thought that he had reaſon to complain of the proceedings againſt him, and having many friends, he continued to act as biſhop in defiance of the council. He even ſaid that he had been depoſed, not for apoſtacy, but merely on account of a difference of opinion between himſelf and Peter, on the ſubject of receiving apoſtates, and thought that Peter

* Socratis, Lib. i. Cap. 7. p. 15.

was

was too eaſy in this reſpect. As there can be no doubt of his having alleged this in his own defence, it is in the higheſt degree improbable that he himſelf ſhould ever have been an apoſtate; and it muſt be obſerved, that we have no account of the Meletians, but what we can collect from the writings of their bitter adverſaries. This ſchiſm commenced A. D. 301. Afterwards Meletius, continuing in oppoſition to the biſhops of Alexandria, took the part of Arius; and notwithſtanding the interpoſition of the council of Nice, the ſect of the Meletians continued till the fifth century, and they were Arians to the laſt.

The origin of the *Donatiſts* was very ſimilar to that of the Meletians, but the ſchiſm they made in the church was much more extenſive, affecting the greateſt part of Africa; whereas that of the Meletians extended no farther than Egypt. Upon the death of Menſurius, biſhop of Carthage, probably A. D. 306, the neighbouring biſhops, without calling in thoſe of Numidia, who had been uſed to aſſiſt on thoſe occaſions, choſe Cæcilianus, a deacon of the church, and he was ordained by Felix, biſhop of Aptungus. But two of the preſbyters of the ſame church, Botrus and Celeſius,

Celeſius, are ſaid to have been diſpleaſed at this preference given to themſelves, who were of a ſuperior order; and the new biſhop having given offence to a woman of fortune, named Lucilla, by reproving her for her ſuperſtition, in kiſſing the bones of ſome ſuppoſed martyrs before ſhe received the communion, ſhe joined them in forming a party againſt him; and a ſynod being called, at which the Numidian biſhops were preſent, Cæcilianus was depoſed, and Majorinus, a reader in the church, and a domeſtic of Lucilla, was ordained biſhop in his place. It was alleged againſt Cæcilianus, that he had not given the aſſiſtance which he ought to have done to thoſe who had ſuffered in the late perſecution, and that Felix, who had ordained him was a *traditor*, or one who had given up the ſacred books when they were demanded in order to be burned, which was deemed to be a heinous offence, of the ſame nature with apoſtacy itſelf.

The party of Majorinus was alſo joined by ſome perſons who had the cuſtody of the ſacred veſſels of the church, which had been concealed in the time of perſecution. And the report, true or falſe, that Cæcilianus was a favourer of the traditors, induced many to

join

join the oppoſite party, and among theſe were almoſt all the biſhops of Mauritania. Majorinus ſoon dying, and being ſucceeded by Donatus, a man of learning and eloquence, and eſteemed a ſaint by his followers, his name was given to the whole ſect, as was that of Socinus to the unitarians of later ages. This account of the origin of the name is much more probable than that of its being derived from another Donatus, a biſhop of Numidia, but no ways eminent, who, along with others, took the part of Majorinus.

The Donatiſts thought it was a ſufficient reaſon for their ſeparation, that Cæcilianus had not been regularly ordained; ſaying, that the part which the traditors had in his ordination vitiated that proceeding, and all that followed upon it. They agreed with the Novatians, in pretending to great purity, but on a very different principle; the purity of the Novatians conſiſting in their churches being free from impure members, but that of the Donatiſts in their not partaking of the impurity which was ſuppoſed to have been derived from the ordination of an impure perſon, which, in their idea, affected all the churches which held communion with them. Conſequently, they conſidered all their ad-

miniſtrations as invalid, ſo that baptiſm administered by them was, in reality, no baptiſm at all. The Donatiſts by no means acted upon the great principle of the Novatians, in refuſing to admit penitents, nor did they condemn ſecond marriages.

The Donatiſts are ſometimes charged with being unitarians; but it does not appear that they were any more ſo than the Montaniſts, who are likewiſe charged with it. The original difference between them and the catholics had nothing to do with any particular opinion concerning the perſon of Chriſt; but many of the Donatiſts, perhaps Donatus himſelf, as well as many of the Montaniſts, were, no doubt, unitarians; and their doctrine being deemed heretical, it was ſometimes aſcribed to the whole body by way of reproach.

From the acknowledgment of Auſtin, the great oppoſer of the Donatiſts, it is evident, that they were not, in general, deficient in any article of what was deemed to be orthodox faith. "Every thing," he ſays, "may "be had without the church, except ſalva- "tion. They may have the ſacrament, and "the goſpel. They may have faith, and "preach, in the name of the Father, the Son,

"and

"and the Holy Spirit; but they cannot have "ſalvation, except in the catholic church*." "Whoever," he ſays, "is ſeparated from the "catholic church, though he may think he "lives well (*laudabiliter*) yet for this crime "only, that he is ſeparated from the unity of "Chriſt, he cannot have life, but the wrath "of God abideth on him†." It is barely credible, that ſo great a man, as Auſtin in many things was, ſhould avow a ſentiment ſo uncharitable, and ſo miſerably miſinterpret the ſcriptures to ſupport it. But it is the duty of an hiſtorian to exhibit every thing that is inſtructive; vices as well as virtues, the weakneſs, as well as the ſtrength, of the human underſtanding.

The Donatiſts were a ſeparate body of chriſtians for near three centuries, and in almoſt every city in Africa there was one biſhop of this ſect, and another of the catholics. All this would have had no ſerious conſequence, if the juriſdiction of one biſhop, or a ſet of biſhops, founded upon the idea of the importance of *the unity of the church*, had not been, in a great meaſure, eſtabliſhed at this time. But in this age a biſhop, who had not

* Super Geſtis cum Emerito, Opera, Vol. vii. p. 631.
† Epiſt. 152. Opera, Vol. ii. p. 696.

been

been ordained by the neighbouring biſhops, and according to the uſual forms, was deemed to be a ſchiſmatic; and, as if he had been a heretic, he was excommunicated by thoſe who diſapproved of his election. And thoſe who took upon them to promote this ſuppoſed neceſſary *unity of the church*, left no means untried, even that of force, where it could be applied, to heal what they took to be a breach in it.

Unfortunately, there is not extant any writing of the Donatiſts, and we muſt never expect an impartial account of any ſect of men from their profeſſed enemies. We have, however, an account of a public conference between the Donatiſts and the catholics, in the reigns of Honorius and Theodoſius, of which an account will be given in its proper place. Againſt the Donatiſts we have ſeveral tracts of Auſtin, and a large treatiſe in ſeven books, addreſſed to Parmenianus, by Optatus, biſhop of Milevi.

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SECTION IX.

Of the Manichæans.

THE ſect of the Manichæans was of a much more ſerious nature, and had more laſting conſequences than that of the Donatiſts. The founder of it was one *Mani*, as he is called in the Eaſt, *Manes* by the Greek writers, and commonly *Manichæus* by the Latins. The account that Euſebius gives of this perſon *, is ſo manifeſtly a mere invective, and ſo full of abſurdity, that I ſhall only inſert it, in Dr. Lardner's tranſlation, in the notes †. It may ſerve however, as a ſpe-

* Euſeb. Hiſt. Lib. vii. Cap. 31. p. 365.

† "About the ſame time that madman, fitly named "Manes, formed the wild hereſy called after his name, "being ſet up for the ruin of many by Satan, the ad- "verſary of God. This perſon was a barbarian in every "reſpect, both in his ſpeech and in his manners. As "for his diſpoſition, it was diabolical and furious, for "he made an appearance of being Chriſt himſelf. Some- "times he gave out that he was the comforter, and the "Holy Ghoſt himſelf. To madneſs he added exceſſive "pride, and as if he had been Chriſt, he choſe twelve to "be companions with him in his innovation. His "ſcheme was patched up of many falſe and impious "hereſies long ſince extinct. This venomous prin- "ciple was brought into our world, the Roman empire,

cimen of the manner in which this writer, and others, commonly treat thoſe perſons whom they conſidered as heretics, and may ſhew us how little we can depend upon their accounts, when there are no facts, or circumſtances, by the help of which we may be able to correct them. The larger account of Socrates *, beſides being equally an invective, has ſo much the air of a fable, that I ſhall neglect it altogether, and content myſelf with giving a ſummary of the more temperate and probable accounts of this extraordinary man by Beauſobre and Lardner, without entering into the diſcuſſion of any particulars.

According to theſe writers, Mani was a perſon born in the dominions of the king of Perſia, rich, learned, educated among philoſophers, and one who attended the Perſian court at an early age. He became a convert to chriſtianity, and openly profeſſed and taught it. At what time he appeared as a public teacher in his native country is uncertain, but his doctrines ſpread into the Roman empire about the end of the third, or the be-

" from Perſia. From that time the impious doctrine " of the Manichæans has infected many. Such was the " riſe of that ſcience falſly ſo called." Credibility, Vol. vi. p. 17. Works, Vol. iii. p. 375.

* Lib. i. Cap. 22. p. 54.

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ginning of the fourth century. His principles were contained in books written by himſelf, but generally aſcribed to Buddas, Addas, or Adimantus. One of them was intitled *Myſteries*, another *Chapters*, or *Heads*, and another *the Goſpel*. He alſo wrote many epiſtles; and after ſpending his whole life in teaching what he thought to be genuine chriſtianity, it is probable that he died a martyr to his profeſſion.

The doctrine of Mani was, in many reſpects, the ſame with that of the Gnoſtics who preceded him; only, inſtead of ſuppoſing evil to have ariſen ultimately from inferior and ſubordinate beings, the offspring of the Supreme Being, he held the doctrine of two original independent principles, the one immaterial and ſupremely good, the other material, and the ſource of all evil; but actuated by a ſoul, or ſomething of the nature of intelligence, the origin of which he does not appear to have clearly explained. The former of theſe principles he uſually termed light, the latter darkneſs.

This world, which contains a mixture of good and evil, Mani ſuppoſed to have had its origin from an attempt that was made upon the kingdom of light by the kingdom

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of darkneſs. The Supreme Being, ſeeing this invaſion, detached from himſelf a power which formed man, inveſting him with the five elements. But the prince of darkneſs over-powered him, and ſeized upon the ſoul, or portion of light, that was in him. On this event the Supreme Being ſent a living ſpirit, which reſcued a portion of this light, and out of it formed the ſun, moon, and ſtars, and then the earth from matter. In other words, ſays Beauſobre, the ſoul is a celeſtial ſubſtance, which God thought fit to mix with matter for the making of the world, and this was occaſioned by ſome enterprize of the material principle, which God foreſaw, but did not think proper to prevent; and he created the ſun, moon, and ſtars, out of thoſe portions of light, which, though they had been mixed with the darkneſs, had preſerved their original purity.

Mani aſcribed the formation of the body of man to the devil, and ſuppoſed that as, in the general ſyſtem itſelf, there were two principles, there were in man two ſouls, the one the ſource of good purpoſes, and the other of evil ones. Adam, the Manichæans ſaid, had much light and little darkneſs, and therefore he lived holily a conſiderable time; but the ad-

verſe part prevailing, he had commerce with his wife, and ſo fell.

Man having fallen, they ſaid that God ſent a Saviour like himſelf, or of the ſame ſubſtance with himſelf, and therefore properly called *God*, and that he was man only in appearance; that he had no birth at all, not even a miraculous one, nor any baptiſm, and only ſeemed to die. Such was their opinion of Chriſt. They alſo believed that the Holy Spirit was another emanation from the Supreme Being, but inferior to him.

The office of Chriſt, the Manichæans ſaid, was to conduct ſouls back again to the kingdom of God, or of light, from which they originally came; but that ſince his aſcenſion, he dwells in the ſun by his power, and in the moon by his wiſdom, as the Holy Spirit reſides upon earth. They therefore, when they prayed, bowed towards the ſun in the daytime, and towards the moon in the night. They believed in a future judgment, but probably not in the eternity of hell torments; and, indeed, believing the doctrine of tranſmigration, and allowing to each ſoul five bodies, and conſequently as many different ſtates of trial, they could not well ſuppoſe that many would be finally loſt, though they ſup-

poſed that God had prepared an eternal priſon for the manſions of pure darkneſs.

The public worſhip of the Manichæans was very ſimple. They read the ſcriptures, they baptized, even infants, in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghoſt, and partook of the Lord's ſupper. They obſerved the Lord's day, but faſted upon it. They likewiſe celebrated Eaſter, and had a regular church diſcipline and cenſures. They rejected the books of the Old Teſtament, but not thoſe of the New, excepting ſome parts, as thoſe which relate to Chriſt's birth, circumciſion, baptiſm, &c. and they paid great reſpect to certain apocryphal books, aſcribed to Peter and Andrew, Thomas and John, or the travels of the apoſtles, the goſpel of Thomas, and the acts of Paul and Thecla, probably written by one Leucian, who, though not properly a Manichæan, was one who entertained ſimilar principles, and lived about A.D. 140.

The ſect of Manichæans was divided into *the elect*, and *the auditors*, of whom the latter might eat fleſh, drink wine, bathe, marry, traffic, poſſeſs eſtates, bear magiſtracies, &c. all which were forbidden to the elect. But theſe were maintained by the auditors, who revered

revered them ſo much, that they always kneeled down to aſk their bleſſing. However, many of the auditors endeavoured to imitate the elect, and their auſtere manners gained them many admirers, ſo that there were Manichæans in many parts of the world, though there were not many of them in any one place. Auſtin was an auditor among the Manichæans nine years, and he promoted their cauſe very much among men of letters, and perſons of conſiderable rank in life.

Beſides the books aſcribed to Addas, Buddas, or Adimantus, but which were probably written by Mani himſelf, and which were held in the higheſt eſteem among them, mention is made of another Manichæan writer, called Agapius; and it is probable that we have almoſt the entire treatiſe of Fauſtus, another of them, in Auſtin's anſwer to it. Of the writers againſt the Manichæans, Fabricius enumerates forty, and his catalogue is by no means complete. Among them Epiphanius enumerates Euſebius of Cæſarea, Euſebius of Emeſa, Serapion of Thmuis, Athanaſius of Alexandria, George of Laodicea, Appollinaris of the ſame place, and Titus of Boſtra.

It may be ſaid with reſpect to the Manichæans, as I obſerved of the Gnoſtics, that the hiſtorical evidences of chriſtianity muſt have been very clear and ſtrong, to induce thoſe who held ſuch philoſophical principles as theirs to embrace it *.

SECTION X.

Of the Conſtitution of the Chriſtian Church before the Time of Conſtantine.

AS there was no material alteration, that we can diſtinctly trace, in the conſtitution of the chriſtian church, from the period in which I laſt mentioned the ſubject, till the time of Conſtantine, I ſhall in this place give a general view of it, in all the intermediate periods, as far as will be neceſſary to my purpoſe, which is not to be particular or critical; and in this I ſhall make great uſe of Lord Chancellor King's treatiſe on this ſubject.

Originally there were ſeveral biſhops, or preſbyters (for it is evident that they meant the ſame thing) in moſt chriſtian churches;

* Lardner's Credibility, Vol. vi. p. 17, &c. Beauſobre's Hiſtoire de Manicheiſme.

but

but in the period of which I am now treating there was only one perſon who had the title of *biſhop* in a church, though the whole juriſdiction of that biſhop was called *one church, or pariſh*, and never *dioceſe*, comprehending ſeveral churches. Let a city have been ever ſo large, and have contained ever ſo many chriſtians, we never read of more than one biſhop in the place. This aroſe from the natural cuſtom of directing particular preſbyters to preſide in thoſe aſſemblies, which, on account of the increaſing number of converts, were obliged to be held ſeparately from the original place of meeting, but which were ſtill conſidered as ſo many branches of the original church. It is probable alſo that villages very near a large town would often be ſerved in the ſame manner, viz. by preſbyters ſent from the town, and not have biſhops of their own, though others at a greater diſtance would of courſe have them. Theſe were called *choroepiſcopi*.

When the chriſtians either in a remote part of a town, or a neighbouring village, were very few, it would be a convenience to them to have their affairs managed in this manner; and if, as their numbers gradually increaſed, no ſenſible inconvenience aroſe from it, this cuſtom of particular congregations being go-

verned

verned by preſbyters would naturally be continued, till at length the biſhop of the original congregation in any place, would inſenſibly become a Dioceſan biſhop, having ſeveral diſtinct congregations under his care, this was the caſe with the Goths, who in all this period, and long afterwards, had no more than one biſhop. Still, however, the members of theſe ſeveral congregations united under one head might aſſemble, either in perſon, or by their deputies, for the choice of a biſhop, or any other buſineſs which concerned them all.

The lord chancellor King, ſuppoſes that, excepting the city of Alexandria, no biſhop had the care of more than a ſingle congregation, or as many people as could meet in one place, till near the time of Conſtantine. But this is in the higheſt degree improbable, and utterly inconſiſtent with what is well known to have been the number of chriſtians in many cities within that period. His chief argument is that the members of each church are often ſaid to meet *in one place.* But this might as well apply to the church of Jeruſalem. For we read that when Paul was at Jeruſalem, A. D. 58, *the whole multitude muſt needs come together* *; though it is certain that

* Acts xxii. 21.

there

there were not leſs than ten thouſand chriſtians at Jeruſalem in the very year of our Saviour's aſcenſion; and it cannot but be ſuppoſed that they muſt have more than doubled or tripled their numbers between that time and this.

Theſe biſhops, as well as the preſbyters, and the other officers of the church, were choſen and appointed by the whole body of chriſtians in the place; and at firſt no other *ordination* would be thought neceſſary. But by degrees it was thought proper, for the ſake of preſerving harmony, and keeping up the favourite idea of the *unity of the church*, that ſome of the neighbouring biſhops ſhould concur in the ordination of thoſe who were to be conſidered as their colleagues. Conſequently their concurrence in the choice of a biſhop became neceſſary; and at length it was ſettled that three of the neighbouring biſhops at leaſt ſhould aſſiſt at the ordination, and that one of them ſhould lay his hands upon him and pray, recommending him and his labours to the divine bleſſing; a ceremony which was afterwards called *conſecration*. But even in this the preſbyters of the church joined the biſhop, doing what themſelves had been uſed to perform before it was thought neceſſary to aſk the

the concurrence of others. After the conſecration it was uſual to give notice of it to the biſhops of other ſees.

Still, however, the original idea of a biſhop being the ſame with a preſbyter, prevailed ſo far, that when he was appointed he was not ſuppoſed to have any new powers. He preſided, indeed, in the council of the preſbyters, and would, no doubt, have much perſonal influence, but he had only a ſingle vote in their deciſions. In the time of Firmilian and Tertullian preſbyters had the power of baptiſing, confirming, and ordaining, but this was with the permiſſion of the biſhop. The preſbyters as well as the biſhops were required to be exempt from all ſecular employments; and conſequently, if they had not wherewith to maintain themſelves, they muſt have been maintained out of the funds of the ſociety.

The office of deacon continued as before, but they ranked with the *clergy*, when theſe came to be conſidered as a diſtinct body from the *laity*. In large churches there were alſo many inferior officers, as thoſe of ſub-deacons, readers, acolyths, and exorciſts. The title of ſub-deacon and acolyth are ſimilar; but the latter are by ſome thought to have had the

care

care of the lamps, and of providing bread and wine for the euchariſt. The exorciſts had the care of inſane perſons, and were, no doubt, taught to pronounce over them the uſual words of adjuration, in the name of Chriſt, &c. for it was the general opinion in this age, as well as in that of our Saviour, that inſane perſons were poſſeſſed with evil ſpirits; and though they were no longer cured in a miraculous manner, yet the ſame forms might be continued with the idea of their having ſome inviſible good effect.

The ordinary chriſtians were not admitted to baptiſm till they had been ſome time in the claſs of *catechumens*, in which they went through a courſe of inſtruction; and in caſe of groſs offences, and eſpecially of apoſtacy in time of perſecution, they were excommunicated, or rejected from the ſociety; and they could not be reſtored to communion with it without going through a ſtate of *penance*, and then they were not admitted without the conſent of the whole church.

Though the people had the power of depoſing, as well as of appointing, and ordaining their biſhops, they did not, in general, chuſe to do this without the ſanction of the neighbouring biſhops; and as in various other tranſ-

tranſactions ſingle churches wiſhed to have the ſanction of their brethren, this gave occaſion to the calling of *ſynods*, or *councils*, and by degrees to the idea of a right in ſynods and councils to interfere in the buſineſs of particular churches, and to decide not only on the conduct, but alſo on the orthodoxy of particular perſons. And as great deference was naturally paid to the biſhops of the greater ſees, as in thoſe of Antioch, Alexandria, Epheſus, Rome, Carthage, &c. the calling of ſynods or councils, in the provinces of which thoſe cities were the capitals, became in time appropriated to them. Of courſe they preſided in them, and had the chief influence in directing their proceedings. This cuſtom of meeting in ſynods, which was afterwards the cauſe of ſo much miſchief, had a very innocent origin, and began it is ſaid, in Greece, where the people of neighbouring cities had been uſed to aſſemble for the purpoſe of conſulting about their common intereſt.

This was the natural progreſs of things, before the interference of the civil power in the affairs of the church, and notwithſtanding the great evils which in a courſe of time aroſe from this ſyſtem, eſpecially in the obſtruction of free enquiry, and in giving occaſion to much

much violence and injuſtice, it was what the wiſeſt men of that age could not well have foreſeen. The idea of the *unity of the church*, and conſequently the uniformity of its faith and practice, as oppoſed to thoſe of ſchiſmatics and heretics, was in the infancy of things a very flattering one; and it was always known, that there could be no great and general good without ſome partial evils. It was alſo thought the part of modeſty in a few to acquieſce in the judgment of many.

In ſome provinces ſynods were held frequently. Thus Firmilian ſays, that in his province they met every year; and it appears from the writings of Cyprian, that in his they ſometimes met oftener. Thoſe who were convened on theſe occaſions were not only the biſhops and the clergy, but alſo laymen, to repreſent the people; the power of a ſynod being naturally lodged in the ſame hands as that of particular churches. But it is probable that, on theſe public occaſions, very few would attend, or at leaſt have much influence, beſides the clergy.

The method of public worſhip among chriſtians in theſe early times was generally this. They began with reading the ſcriptures, and ſometimes other uſeful writings,

after

after which they ſung pſalms, chiefly thoſe of David, and then the biſhop, or any other perſon appointed by him, gave a diſcourſe, or ſermon, which was generally an expoſition of the portions of ſcripture which had been read. Then followed the prayer which preceded the celebration of the euchariſt, and the ſuperſtitious cuſtom of looking towards the Eaſt while they prayed, ſoon became general. In this prayer they ſometimes introduced the Lord's prayer, but they had no preſcribed liturgy, every perſon who officiated praying according to his ability; and indeed in that age no public ſpeaker uſed any notes. After prayer the people joined by ſaying aloud. *Amen.*

When perſons were baptized they anſwered to certain queſtions that were put to them, the firſt of which was whether they would lead a good life; which was commonly expreſſed by ſaying that they renounced the devil, and all his works, or the world, &c. They were then aſked whether they believed the articles of the chriſtian faith, which were repeated to them in the order of what is commonly called the apoſtles creed. At firſt this conſiſted of very few articles, but afterwards more were added, in order

order to exclude the Gnoſtics. In conſequence of this, though the baptiſmal creed conſiſted of nearly the ſame articles in all the catholic churches, yet, as it was not committed to writing, there were ſome variations in it in different churches.

That infants were both baptized, and alſo partook of the euchariſt, there ſeems to me to be no reaſonable doubt; ſince it is impoſſible to trace its riſe, or any variation in the practice; and occaſions occurred, at leaſt in the time of Auſtin, on which learned and ingenious men might have availed themſelves of the conſideration of the novelty of the practices, if they could have proved it to be novel.

At baptiſm adult perſons anſwered for themſelves; but for children there were appointed *ſponſors*, whoſe office it was to inſtruct them in the principles of the chriſtian religion when they were capable of it. The ſuperſtitious cuſtom of exorciſing, or caſting out evil ſpirits, which were ſuppoſed to poſſeſs or haunt perſons, alſo preceded baptiſm in this period. The miniſter then prayed, and his prayer was very ſoon ſuppoſed to convey ſome purifying virtue to the water, by which it could actually waſh away ſin, and on

this account ſome ſuperſtitious perſons deferred baptiſm till they apprehended that they were near death. In the act of baptizing it ſoon became the cuſtom to immerſe the perſon three times, correſponding to the ſucceſſive invocation of the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

In caſes in which the dipping of the whole body was inconvenient, as of ſick perſons, &c. ſprinkling was thought to ſuffice, and though this was not deemed to be ſo regular a baptiſm as that by immerſion, it was not denied that it had the ſame conſequences; and they who had been baptized in this manner were never baptized again.

After baptiſm the chriſtians put on white raiment, and were then anointed with oil, called the *chriſm*, which was applied to the forehead by ſigning them with the ſign of the croſs; and after this the perſon who baptized put his hands upon them, praying that they might receive the Holy Ghoſt. The ſuperſtitious origin of theſe cuſtoms will eaſily be conceived. Anointing was a ceremony of conſecration, borrowed from the Jewiſh ritual; and the ſign of the croſs was to ſhew that they ſhould be ready to take up their croſs and follow Chriſt. And to the above-mentioned ceremonies were

4 ſome-

ſometimes added the eating of milk and honey, as a token of the new converts becoming again children, and commencing a new life.

The public ſervice of every Lord's-day concluded with the celebration of the Lord's Supper; but it was occaſionally adminiſtered early in the day, and ſometimes twice a day. It ſoon became the cuſtom to exclude the catechumens, as well as thoſe who were in a ſtate of penance, from attending this part of the ſervice, on the idea of its being a *myſtery*, reſembling the heathen *initiations*. Previous to the celebration in ſome places, and in others after it, thoſe who attended made their oblations, of things proper for the uſe of the poor, and for other purpoſes. After this the miniſter made a diſcourſe proper to the occaſion, and then prayed. When this was done, he brake the bread, and the deacons diſtributed it to all who were preſent. But in ſome places this was done by the preſbyters, or by the biſhops themſelves, the people coming to the table, and receiving it ſtanding. Laſtly, they ſung a hymn, which cloſed the ſervice.

The chriſtian churches in this age were generally built with one end pointing to the Eaſt, but they were not conſidered as *holy*, no ceremony of conſecration being then uſed. The

chief day for aſſembling in theſe places for public worſhip, was the firſt day of the week, or the Lord's-day, which was conſidered as a feſtival; and on it they neither faſted, nor kneeled, but performed their devotions ſtanding. It was alſo the cuſtom in many of the eaſtern churches, to aſſemble for divine worſhip on Saturday, which was the Jewiſh ſabbath.

The biſhops appointed occaſional *faſts*, as they ſaw reaſon, and on theſe days it was the cuſtom to abſtain from food till the evening. But it was generally the cuſtom to have two weekly faſts, viz. Wedneſdays and Fridays, commonly called *ſtations*, in alluſion to the military ſtations, or ſoldiers ſtanding on their guard; and on theſe days the faſting ended with divine ſervice, at three in the afternoon. The faſting on Friday was in commemoration of the crucifixion; but the reaſon for faſting on Wedneſday is not ſo well known. Perhaps it was the day on which Jeſus was betrayed by Judas. In Eaſter week it has obtained the appellation of *Aſh Wedneſday*. Beſides theſe weekly faſts, which were voluntary, there was an annual one, now called *Lent*, which was ſoon conſidered as neceſſary to be obſerved. It laſted from Friday, the day of the crucifixion in Eaſter week, to the Sunday

Sunday following, which was the day of the reſurrection; and becauſe this faſt generally continued forty hours, it was thence termed *quadrageſima*. In the progreſs of ſuperſtition this faſt of forty hours was extended to forty days. The ſtricteſt of all the faſts was called *ſuperpoſition*, and continued till the morning of the next day, as on Eaſter eve, and with ſome on every Saturday.

The moſt ancient feſtival among chriſtians was that of Eaſter, in commemoration of the reſurrection of Chriſt. The next was that of Pentecoſt, or Whitſunday, in remembrance of the deſcent of the Holy Spirit. This is mentioned by Origen and Tertullian. Chriſtmas was not obſerved in this period, but the Epiphany, or the day of Chriſt's baptiſm, was obſerved by the Baſilidians. Beſides theſe feſtivals, every church celebrated its own martyrs on the day of their deaths. All theſe feſtivals were ſpent in religious exerciſes.

The revenues of any particular church was one groſs fund, to which all contributed voluntarily, according to their ability; and, with the conſent of all the members, it was appropriated to particular uſes, as the maintenance of their clergy, and other officers, the relief of the poor, the repairs and other expences attending

attending the place of worſhip, &c. In this diſtribution, as in every thing elſe, the biſhop, without having nominally any more power, would of courſe have the moſt influence; and before the cloſe of this period the great ſees were poſſeſſed of large revenues.

SECTION XI.

Of the Doctrines of this Period.

OF thoſe doctrines which have been deemed to be moſt important, thoſe concerning the perſon of Chriſt continued without any ſenſible variation from the time of Juſtin Martyr to that of Conſtantine. The common people were in general Unitarians, as indeed we find them to be in a later period; but there was, no doubt, an increaſe of Trinitarians, eſpecially among the more learned clergy, who were ſtruck with the flattering idea (the ſame, in fact, which had miſled the Gnoſtics) of the natural ſuperiority of the founder of their religion to any thing merely human. They thought that to the complete man

man Jeſus, there was ſuperadded the uncreated *Logos* of the Father, which had aſſumed a proper perſonality at the time of the creation, and was inſeparably united to him from the time of his conception. It was, however, univerſally acknowledged, that there was a time (if that could be called *time* which preceded the creation) in which this logos had not been emitted from the Father; ſo that, in the whole eternity which preceded this event, God was the ſame being that the Jews and the Unitarians held him to be, viz. abſolutely *one*, and *without a ſon*.

That Chriſt had no human ſoul beſides this logos, and that this human ſoul had pre-exiſted when the ſouls of other men had not, and that this created logos (which afterwards became the proper ſoul of Jeſus) had been the inſtrument in the hand of God in making the world, conſiſting of all things viſible and inviſible, material and immaterial, is an opinion that, as far as appears, was not ſtarted in this period, but we ſhall ſee it to riſe, and be the cauſe of great commotions in the chriſtian world, in the very beginning of the next.

With reſpect to every doctrine of a properly practical tendency, it cannot be doubted that it was the opinion of all the chriſtian world

world within this period, that every man has a natural power to do the will of God; and that God, without the intervention of Chriſt, is naturally placable to returning ſinners; ſo that the doctrine of ſupernatural grace, of original ſin, of predeſtination, and of atonement, were then unknown: nor, indeed, did any of them appear till a much later period. It ſeems, however, to have been generally thought, that God afforded extraordinary aid on extraordinary occaſions, as in the time of martyrdom, &c.

There began, indeed, to prevail ſome obſcure notion that, when it is ſaid that Chriſt died a *ranſom* for us, there was ſomething more than a mere figure of ſpeech intended. But that this ranſom had been paid to God, and that he had been thereby rendered placable, ſo that, on this account, repentance had become available to pardon, had not been ſuppoſed by any one. If this had been the caſe, the ſyſtem of the Gnoſtics in general, and that of the Manichæans in particular, would have been objected to, as providing no proper atonement for the ſins of men. But whatever elſe was then urged againſt that ſcheme, this argument is never mention, not even by Auſtin, in a much later period.

To make ſomething real of the ranſom that is ſaid to be given for us, in two or three paſſages of the New Teſtament, it was ſuppoſed that, ſince God is the perſon who is ſaid to have paid this price for us, it muſt have been given by God to that being in whoſe power we then were, viz. the devil. But the power that he had acquired over the human race by the ſin of Adam, was ſimply that of making men mortal; death, or mortality, having been the original penalty of ſin. By paying this ranſom, therefore, it was thought that we were recovered out of the power of the devil, and reſtored to our former condition of immortality; not indeed to take place immediately, but after death, ſo that all perſons who partook of the redemption by Chriſt Jeſus would be rendered immortal in a future ſtate.

Conſequently, this vague notion (which, however, does not ſeem to have been much attended to, for it is very ſeldom mentioned) had no connexion at all with the pardon of ſin, with reſpect to individuals of the human race. Beſides, they who thought that God had paid this price for the redemption of mankind from the power of the devil, were univerſally of opinion, that, if he had pleaſed,

he might have redeemed, or delivered, men from the power of the devil, or their ſubjection to death, in any other way. He might have done it, they ſaid, at his arbitrary pleaſure, or by mere power, without giving any ranſom at all; but that he choſe to deliver men in this way, that he might appear juſt and equitable in his proceedings.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

E R R A T A.

N. B. (*b*) Signifies, *from the Bottom of the Page.*

Preface, Page xx. line 13, for *proves*, read *grows*.
Page 40, line 15, for *diſtinguiſhing*, read *diſtinguiſhed.*
Page 220, line 14, for *no doubt*, read *little doubt.*
Page 232, line 1, for *accuſed*, read *accuſer.*
Page 277, line 3 (*b*) for 3716, read 3761.
Page 285, line 5 (*b*) for *in*, read *is.*
Page 268, line 10, for *that*, read *who ſay that.*
Page 345, line 21, dele *he.*
Page 359, line 9, for *Sixus*, read *Sixtus.*
Page 490, line 4 (*b*) dele *at Rome.*

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JULY 75
N. MANCHESTER,